

Summary: Harry was left on the doorstep at the age of one. What would have happened if the Dursleys had done what they were supposed to do? What if Harry got a proper childhood and knew of his magic?

Disclaimer: I do not own any of this, except for my own character Arianna Rosier.

A/N: This is my first fic so please go easy on me! Any advice though is greatly welcome!

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Chapter 1: The boy who lived

Nearly ten years have passed since the Dursleys had woken to find their nephew on the front step, but things did not change much for the residents of Privet Drive. The sun rose to light up the same tidy garden and same neat house. Only the photographs on the mantel piece showed how much time has passed. Ten years ago there had been lots of pictures of two baby boys, but they were no longer babies and now the photographs showed the two cousins learning how to ride their bikes, riding on the roundabout at the fair, playing computer games and holding mock fights.

The boys were asleep at the moment in their respective bedrooms but not for long as two alarm clocks sounded throughout the house. Waking up with a start Harry sighed, it was Dudley's birthday today which meant that he had to do all the chores. Sighing he sat up and pulled his glasses on, he got out of bed and changed into a t-shirt and a pair of jeans.

When he was dressed he went downstairs into the kitchen. The table was almost hidden behind Dudley's presents. It looked like Dudley had got the new computer he wanted not to mention the second TV and the racing bike. This was also good news for Harry as it meant that he would get Dudley's old computer, TV and bike. Uncle Vernon had always favored Dudley that is no secret but Dudley and Aunt Petunia saw them as equals. So whilst Harry only got one present every birthday Dudley always shared his.

As close as the two boys are they couldn't be more different in looks. Dudley was much bigger in size and had a lot more muscles. Harry however was skinnier and had messy black hair and green eyes as opposed to Dudley's neat blond hair and blue eyes. Harry had a thin face, knobby knees and wore a new pair of brass-rimmed glasses. The only thing Harry liked about his appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead which was shaped like a bolt of lightning.

Uncle Vernon entered the kitchen as Harry was turning over the bacon.

"Hello!" He barked, by way of a morning greeting. The two had established a sort of civil relationship and tried to stay out of each other's way as much as possible and addressed each other as little as possible.

Harry was frying the eggs when Dudley arrived with his mother. Dudley nodded in Harry's direction as Harry called out, "Happy Birthday." Harry set the bacon and eggs on the table as Dudley finished counting his presents. His face fell. He had a large, pink face, not much neck under his thick, fat head.

"Thirty-six," he said looking up at his mother and father. "That's two less than last year."

"Dudley, you missed one from me." Harry spoke up after swallowing a mouthful of bacon. He threw his present over the table and watched as Dudley caught it and nodded his thanks. Harry had saved up his pocket money to be able to afford the present.

"Okay, thirty-seven then." said Dudley going red in the face. Harry recognized the signs and gobbled down his breakfast as fast as possible in case Dudley turned the table over in a tantrum.

Aunt Petunia obviously scented danger too, because she said quickly, "And we'll buy you two new presents while we are out today. How's that popkin? Is that all right?"

“So that would give me...thirty-nine...okay, but Harry is picking them for me.” Dudley sat down heavily and grabbed the nearest parcel and began opening them. Harry smiled and brought a plate of bacon down for Dudley to start eating. The two knew each other so well that words weren’t necessary. At that moment the phone rang and Aunt Petunia answered it talking to Uncle Vernon all the while.

Harry watched Dudley unwrap the racing bike, a digital camera, a remote control aeroplane which he gave straight to Harry, sixteen new computer games that they will split later and a video camera. He was ripping the paper of a gold wristwatch when Aunt Petunia came back from the telephone trying to hide her relief.

“That was Marge, one of her dogs has come down with something and she won’t be able to make it.” She said. Aunt Marge was Uncle Vernon’s sister, whom everyone disliked despite Uncle Vernon’s best efforts to change their minds.

Before Uncle Vernon could respond the door bell rang – “Oh, Good Lord, they’re here!” said Aunt Petunia frantically – and a moment later, Dudley’s best friend, Piers Polkiss, walked in with his mother. Piers was a scrawny boy with a face like a rat who had a habit of following Harry and Dudley around trying to be cool.

Half an hour later, Harry was excited about his first trip to the zoo. Although Dudley and Piers have both been before Harry had been too sick to come, he had been taken to Mrs Figg, a mad old lady who lived two streets away. Harry hated it there. The whole house smelled of cabbage and Mrs Figg made him look at photographs of all the cats she’d ever owned. Luckily he rarely went there.

While he drove, Uncle Vernon complained to Aunt Petunia. He liked to complain about things: people at work, Harry’s hair, the council, Harry’s hair and the bank were just a few of his favourite subjects. This morning it was motorbikes.

“...roaring along like maniacs, the young hoodlums,” He said, as a motorbike overtook them.

“I had a dream about a motorbike,” said Harry, remembering suddenly. “It was flying.”

Uncle Vernon tensed and stopped the car turning around to face Harry as Aunt Petunia and Dudley also tensed up. He looked pointedly at Piers before saying, “Motorbikes don’t fly!”

Harry gave a very small nod, “I know that, but it was just a dream.”

Uncle Vernon sighed and shrugged turning back to the road muttering something about kids and their overactive imagination. Dudley and Piers snickered as Harry sighed in defeat. The Dursleys had told Harry about his magic when he had turned seven and about his parent’s death. Although they weren’t able to help him with his magic Harry’s family understood.

Especially after a few accidents when his magic got away from him. The most notable of which included the time he turned a girl’s hair bright blue after she had insulted Dudley or the time he had somehow transported Dudley and himself into the living room after a prank they played. They weren’t able to do much themselves but they did call in the help of his father’s old friend, Remus Lupin who taught him many things about the wizarding world.

Harry was informed of his standing; he was the muggle equivalent of an Earl, he had the title of Lord Potter. But he was unable to claim his seat in the Wizengamot until he was fifteen, in the meantime Remus held a seat in his name. His parents had left him several estates, wizarding shares and stocks, Harry was shocked to learn of how rich he is. He was also told of Remus being a werewolf, his father and god-father being animagus.

Harry’s parents had seven main properties of which six went to Harry, the other was given to Remus. The main estate was Potter Manor which had been unused in over twelve years. One cottage where Harry had first lived was located in Godric’s Hallow and was severely damaged. Harry’s other properties included a Holiday villa in Italy, an apartment block in New York and a small residential house in southern Australia.

The last four properties and various other small apartments were being rented out to earn Harry some extra income. He was also earning dividends from his shares and profits from the Potter family businesses. It seems as if Harry owns a number of mining companies as well as a couple of hotels that generates enough profit to cover Harry's entire trust fund in one year.

Harry had hoped to visit Potter Manor before he started Hogwarts that year but Remus was busy and wasn't able to find someone else to come with them. It is the largest wizarding manor in England. The estate consists of extensive gardens and fields, and a Quidditch pitch. There are approximately a hundred rooms altogether, fifty of which are bedrooms with three master bedrooms in three separate -

wings. There is a large potions lab down in the basement, a dueling chamber, several parlors, ballrooms and dining rooms. The wards and enchantments on the manor are amongst the strongest in the country.

They day of Dudley's birthday was a very sunny Sunday and the zoo was crowded with families. The Dursleys bought two large chocolate ice-creams for Dudley and Piers and a vanilla one for Harry. Dudley had one of his best birthdays yet as the boys joked around about the different animals or making kids cry when their parent's backs were turned. They ate lunch at the zoo restaurant and Dudley complained that his meal wasn't big enough so Uncle Vernon bought him another and he gave the first to Harry.

After lunch they visited the reptile house. It was cool and dark in here, with lit windows all along the walls. Behind the glass, all sorts of lizards and snakes were crawling and slithering over bits of wood and stone. They quickly found the largest snake in the place. It could have wrapped its body twice around Uncle Vernon's car and crushed it into a dustbin – but at the moment it didn't look in the mood. In fact it was asleep. Dudley and Harry watched the snake as Uncle Vernon came up behind them. Aunt Petunia had taken Piers to the bathroom.

"Make it move," Dudley whined at his father. Uncle Vernon rapped the glass smartly with his knuckles, but the snake just snoozed on.

"This is boring," Dudley moaned and started to shuffle away. Harry looked at the snake and was surprised to see the snake open its beady eyes. It slowly raised its head until its eyes were on a level with Harry's. It winked.

Harry stared; he turned around and called Dudley back quickly. "Dudley come here, look at what this snake's doing." Dudley came around to stand next to Harry as the snake made a noise that sounded like hello to Harry.

"Eh...hello." Unsure whether the snake could hear him or not Harry just smiled and nodded his head.

"Harry...what was that?"

Confused Harry turned to his cousin with a raised eyebrow. "What do you mean? I just said hello to the snake."

"You were speaking like snake language, Harry. Do you think this is something to do with you being a wizard?" Dudley looked shocked and cast around wildly as he said the word wizard afraid someone was going to pop up.

"Really? I did? Maybe, I don't know much about being a wizard."

Both boys were shocked as they turned back to the snake. "How is it that I can speak to you?" Harry asked the Boa Constrictor curiously.

"You did not know that you're a speaker?" Harry shook his head. "You are called a Parselmouth in your language. The language we are speaking now is known as Parseltongue."

Harry was shocked as Dudley nudged him in the side, gathering himself he turned around to find Piers heading back their way.

"We'll talk about this later." Harry whispered before giving the snake a quick wave and walking off with Dudley waddling behind.

After visiting a couple more animals Uncle Vernon took them to the mall to let Harry pick Dudley's last two presents. As they entered the

department store Dudley whispered to Harry, "Pick both for yourself, I have enough."

Before Harry could protest Aunt Petunia came over and ushered them forward muttering about getting Piers home in time for dinner. After half an hour Harry picked a nice chess set and a new Soccer ball. The year they started grade 3 was the year he discovered his talent for soccer, he had the speed and the agility. He was now the captain of his school's team playing as striker. Dudley however was the school's rugby captain in the position of inside centre. The two would spend hours in the park practicing and training.

That night after dinner the two boys gathered Dudley's presents (minus the two Harry had bought earlier in the day) in Dudley's room and divided the large pile into two smaller piles. Harry's pile already contained the remote control aeroplane, and Dudley's old camera. Dudley's pile had his new racing bike, his new digital camera and his video camera. They sorted through the computer games deciding who would like which better. Dudley ended up with ten and Harry put the other six in his pile. By the time they were done Harry had been given Dudley's old TV, his old computer, a new backpack that Dudley didn't like, Dudley's old bike and Dudley's old VCR along with permission to borrow Dudley's videos whenever he wanted.

Summer had arrived and Dudley received news that he had been accepted into Uncle Vernon's old school, Smeltings. Harry would be heading off to Hogwarts unless he didn't get his acceptance letter in which case he would be heading to Stonewell High. Dudley was excited and said that there was no doubt that Harry would get in.

In July, Aunt Petunia took both boys along to buy Dudley's new uniform. Harry fought hard not to snicker at how funny the outfit looked. Aunt Petunia said that they would get Harry's the next day if his letter didn't come. Nodding Harry and Dudley went upstairs to get change before heading out for a run. They were both training hard to make the sport teams for high school or in Harry's case the quidditch team.

The next morning it was Dudley's turn to cook breakfast and they all sat down to pancakes which were Dudley's specialty when they

heard the click of the letter box and the flop of letters on the doormat. Without saying a word Harry set his cutlery down and went to collect the post. There were three things there: a post-card from Aunt Marge, a bill and a – letter for Harry.

Harry looked it over as he headed back towards the kitchen, he rarely ever got letters. Aside from a couple of birthday invitations he had only received one other letter from school about him receiving an award. Yet it was addressed to him:

Mr H. Potter

The Smallest Bedroom

4 Privet Drive

Little Whinging

Surrey

The envelope was thick and heavy, made of yellowish parchment, and the address was written in emerald-green ink. There was no stamp. He entered the kitchen and wordlessly handed Uncle Vernon the bill and the postcard, he sat down and opened the envelope.

Uncle ripped open the bill, snorted in disgust and flipped over the postcard.

“Marge’s ill,” he informed Aunt Petunia. “Ate a funny whelk...”

“Oh yes!” Harry said suddenly. “I got in!”

He waved his letter around excitedly which was written on the same heavy parchment as the envelope. Curious Aunt Petunia walked over and read it quickly. She smiled, she knew it would happen. He can’t deny who his parents were. She read the letter out loud for the rest of the family:

Dear Mr Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have a place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment.

Term begins on 1 September. We await your owl no later than 31 July.

Yours Sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall

Deputy Headmistress

Uncle Vernon closed his eyes as if begging for patience. Finally he sighed and opened his eyes.

"You are to go but only on the condition that you refer to your aunt for everything, I don't want anything to do with that school."

"Yes Uncle Vernon." Harry nodded before turning to his aunt with the question in his eyes.

She smiled, "Of course Harry. How about we head over to Diagon Alley and get you your supplies."

Harry grinned and stood up ready to leave before his aunt grabbed his collar.

"Not before you finish your breakfast young man!" She said firmly as she pushed him down into his seat showing great strength for someone of her built.

Dudley snickered as Harry made a face and quickly finished his breakfast before heading upstairs to get his new backpack. It was another fifteen minutes before the boys piled into Aunt Petunia's car and left to explore a new world. Uncle Vernon had wanted Dudley to stay home or go to work with him but Dudley had argued that if Harry had been allowed to come to his school shopping then he should be allowed to go.

Aunt Petunia drove them into London and found a parking spot seemingly in the middle of nowhere as Harry and Dudley looked round fascinated as they got out of the car. They hadn't been to London before except to see the Big Ben years ago on a family vacation.

"Well this is it." Aunt Petunia said pointing to a grubby looking pub in front of them. If she hadn't pointed it out Harry felt certain he would have missed it. People didn't glance at it looking from the book store on one side to the record store on the other. In fact Harry had a strange feeling they were the only ones who could see it. So this was the famous Leaky Cauldron?

Harry entered the place as Aunt Petunia held the door open for them. For a famous place, it was very dark and shabby. A few old women were sitting in a corner, drinking tiny glasses of sherry. One of them was smoking a long pipe. A little man in a top hat was talking to the old barman, who was quite bald and looked like a gummy old walnut. The low buzz of chatter stopped when they walked in. Then as they decided that they didn't know them they went back to their conversations.

Aunt Petunia led them over to the bartender and smiled, "Hi Tom, we need to get into Diagon Alley if you please."

"And why would I let you in if you can't get in yourself?" The old barman peered at them suspiciously.

"Well, my nephew, Harry here needs to get his school supplies." Aunt Petunia said resting a hand on Harry's shoulder.

At her words the whole room suddenly went completely still and silent.

"Good Lord," said the barman, peering at Harry, "is this – can this be – ?"

He hurried out from behind the bar, rushed towards Harry and seized his hand, tears in his eyes.

"Welcome back, Mr Potter, welcome back."

Harry was speechless, his aunt and Remus have both mentioned that he was famous but he never had really understood it. There was a great scraping of chairs as Harry found himself shaking hands with everyone in the Leaky Cauldron. He tried to keep a tight grip on his backpack as he wondered through the pub.

Impatient Harry nodded and followed his Aunt towards the back and out into a small courtyard. Meanwhile Dudley was flexing his muscle and put himself as a wall between anyone who dared try and get close to his cousin.

They finally made it to the courtyard and sighed with relief. Tom tapped the wall three times and Harry watched fascinated as the bricks quivered and a hole appeared growing bigger and bigger until they were facing an archway large enough for a giant to fit through. Harry looked at his Aunt's amused face to Dudley's shocked face and realized he must look like an idiot.

Chapter 2: Diagon Alley

"Welcome," Said Aunt Petunia, "to Diagon Alley."

Harry laughed with amazement as they made their way down the street. Harry looked in shock at some of the shop names. He glanced in amazement at the cauldrons before turning his attention to the owl shop and a store that displayed broomsticks. Amazed Harry looked at the newest one, a Nimbus 2000. In the end Dudley was forced to drag him away.

Finally they reached a snowy-white building which towered over the other little shops. They walked up the white stone steps and entered through a pair of bronze doors. Now they faced a second pair of doors, silver this time, with words engraved upon them.

The boys were lost as to where they were but continued to follow Aunt Petunia until they reached a counter.

“Morning,” said Aunt Petunia to a free goblin. “We’ve come to take some money out of Mr Harry Potter’s safe.”

“You have his key, Ma’am?”

“Got it right here,” she said as she pulled out a tiny golden key from her wallet.

The goblin looked at it closely.

“That seems to be in order. I will have someone take you down. Griphook!”

Griphook was yet another goblin. Aunt Petunia gestured for Harry and Dudley to follow as Griphook lead them towards one of the doors leading off the hall. The goblin whistled and a small cart came hurtling up the tracks towards them. They climbed in and were off. Harry was surprised that the cart seemed to know where it was going because Griphook wasn’t steering.

The cart stopped at last beside a small door in the passage wall. They got out and watched as Griphook took the small gold key and unlocked the door. A lot of green smoke came billowing out, and as it cleared, Harry and Dudley gasped. Inside were mounds of gold coins. Columns of silver. Heaps of little bronze ones too.

“All yours Harry. The gold ones are Galleons, seventeen silver Sickles to a Galleon and twenty-nine Knuts to a Sickle. Should be easy enough to remember.”

Aunt Petunia helped Harry piled some into his bag before carefully zipping it up. They piled into the cart again and left.

“Now what do you want to look at first?”

“Thank you! That would be great. Um...How about my uniform first?” Harry asked unsure as he consulted his list.

Aunt Petunia nodded and led them towards Madam Malkin’s Robes for All Occasions which was obviously the uniform store. They

entered the store and found a squat, smiling witch dressed in mauve whom Harry assumed was Madam Malkin.

“Hogwarts, dear?” she said, before anyone could say a word. “Got the lot here – another boy being fitted up just now, in fact. So one of you boys will just have to wait.”

“Actually madam, only Harry here will be attending Hogwarts.”

Madam Malkin nodded and gestured for Harry to follow her to the back of the shop. A boy with a pale, pointed face was standing on a footstool while a second witch pinned up his long black robes. Madam Malkin stood Harry on a stool next to him, slipped a long robe over his head and began to pin it to the right length.

“Hello,” said the boy, “Hogwarts too?”

“Yes,” said Harry.

“My father’s next door buying my books and mother’s up the street looking at wands,” said the boy. He had a bored, drawling voice. “Then I’m going to drag them off to look at racing brooms. I don’t see why first-years can’t have their own. I think I’ll bully my father into getting me one and I’ll smuggle it in somehow.”

Harry smirked slightly as he was reminded of Dudley.

“Have you got your own broom?” the boy went on.

“No, not yet.”

“Play quidditch at all?”

“Unfortunately no,” Harry said remembering Remus mentioning it a couple of times.

“ I do – father says it’s a crime if I’m not picked to play for my house, and I must say I agree. Know what house you’ll be in yet?”

“No, course not.” Said Harry, wondering if there is a point in asking.

"Of course," the boy smiled his agreement, "But I just know I'll be in Slytherin, all our family have been – imagine being in Hufflepuff, I think I'd leave, wouldn't you?"

"I suppose, not that I'd get there in the first place."

"Nice to see we are on the same wave length. Name's Draco by the way." The boy, Draco, stuck his hand out and smiled.

"Harry, nice to meet you." Harry smiled back giving the boy a handshake.

"So are you here alone?"

"No, I'm here with my aunt and cousin."

"Oh, what about your parents?"

"They're dead. Died when I was a baby, I was raised by my aunt and uncle. You're lucky you still have your parents."

"Oh sorry, but they were our kind, weren't they?" The boy did sound genuinely sorry.

"Of course." Harry smirked, he was beginning to like this boy. He thought that they might be able to be friends.

"I really don't think they should let the other sort in, do you? What's your surname, anyway?"

Before Harry could answer, Madam Malkin said, "That's you done, my dear" and Harry hopped down from the stool and nodded at Draco.

"I guess I'll see you at Hogwarts then." Harry smirked. As he left he paused and turned around. "The name's Potter. Just so you know."

Without waiting for a response Harry left as he walked out to find aunt petunia had bought him some ice-cream. They stopped to buy parchment and quills after they had finished eating. Harry laughed

when he found ink that changed color as you wrote. Putting everything away into his backpack, Harry consulted his list.

“How about books next?”

Aunt Petunia nodded and pointed to the shop called Flourish and Blotts. Whilst they were there Harry also bought a book called *Hogwarts: A History* and a couple books on his ability to speak Parseltongue. Next they bought Harry’s cauldron along with his scales and a brass telescope. Then they visited the apothecary where Harry bought his basic set of ingredients. Last but not least on his list was his wand.

The last shop was narrow and shabby. Peeling gold letters over the door read *Ollivanders: Makers of fine wands since 382 BC*. A tinkling bell rang somewhere in the depths of the shop as they stepped inside.

“Good afternoon,” said a soft voice. Harry, Dudley and Aunt Petunia all jumped as they found an old man standing before them, his wide pale eyes shining like moons through the gloom of the shop.

“Hello,” Harry said smiling very slightly.

“Ah yes,” said the man. “Yes, yes. I thought I’d be seeing you soon, Harry Potter. You have your mother’s eyes. It seems only yesterday she was in here herself, buying her first wand. Ten and a quarter inches long, swishy, made of willow. Nice wand for charm work. Oh and who have we here?”

“Oh Mr Ollivander,” Harry took a guess as to the man’s name. “This is my Aunt Petunia, my mother’s sister. And this is my cousin Dudley.”

“Nice to meet you both. Now on to business. Which is your wand arm, Mr Potter?”

“Well, I’m right handed,” said Harry.

“Hold out your arm. That’s it.” He took several measurements he said, “Every Ollivander wand has a core of a powerful magical substance,

Mr Potter. No two wands are the same, just as no two creatures is the same.”

Mr Ollivander went about giving Harry various wands to try. He had hardly raised the wand, however, when Mr Ollivander snatched it out of his hand and handed him another.

“Tricky customer, eh? Not to worry, we’ll find the perfect match here somewhere...”

Mr Ollivander came back to the front of the shop from his storage room at the back holding a wand case. Harry took the wand fully expecting it to be snatched up again only this time he felt sudden warmth in his fingers. He raised the wand and brought it swishing down through the air and a stream of green and silver sparks shot from the end like a firework.

Aunt Petunia clapped and cheered as Mr Ollivander cried, “Oh, bravo! Yes, indeed, oh very good...” He dragged on, eyed Aunt Petunia, shook his head and proceeded to wrap Harry’s wand back in its box. Harry payed seven gold Galleons for his wand and Mr Ollivander bowed them from his shop.

“I have one last place I want us to stop before we head back home.”

They entered the owl shop and left twenty minutes later with two owls. Harry carried a large cage which held a beautiful snow owl, fast asleep with her head under her wing. Dudley also carried a large cage only his held an eagle owl that was also fast asleep under his wing. The two couldn’t stop stammering their thanks. They made a quick stop to buy another set of parchment and quills for Dudley so the two can keep in contact throughout the year.

The next month Harry and Dudley spent going over Harry’s books and getting to know their owls. Harry named his Hedwig from a name he found in A History of Magic. And Dudley named his Hermes after the messenger god. They left their windows open so that the owls could come and go as they please. Harry had memorized his books fairly early in the summer and was now working on taking notes. He

had always been studious and was determined to do well at his new school and make his parents proud.

Dudley had read some of the books as well and found magic fascinating; he particularly liked the idea of Potions as it seemed interesting. They read the books on parseltongue together and were surprised when they discovered that it was passed down from Slytherin especially as Harry knew he was a descendant of Gryffindor.

They celebrated Harry's birthday by taking him to the movies to see TMNT two. Harry has always liked the ninja turtles. He received a new set of clothes from his aunt and uncle. A pair of jeans, a green shirt, a black jacket and new trainers. Dudley gifted him with a photo album for his photos of his new friends. Harry also received a new broomstick from Remus himself.

As September first came closer Harry arranged for Aunt Petunia and Dudley to drop him off at the station. Uncle Vernon muttered something about work before changing the topic. Harry woke at five in the morning and was too excited to go back to sleep. He got up and changed into his new outfit, he checked his list and his trunk to make sure he had everything he needed, checked that Hedwig's cage was shut and then he took his trunk downstairs to wait for the rest of the house to wake. Two hours later Dudley helped Harry pile his heavy trunk in the back of the car, Harry said goodbye to Uncle Vernon and they set off.

They reached the station at half past ten. Dudley and Harry worked together to load his trunk onto a trolley and Harry wheeled it into the station. Harry stopped in between platforms nine and ten looking from one to the other uncertainly.

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A/N: Okay, so I kind of kept it as similar to the book as possible. Any comments?

Chapter 3: Platform Nine and Three-Quarters

Aunt Petunia however wasn't fazed. She took Harry's wrist and led him to the barrier between the platforms. She dropped his hand and ran at the barrier seemingly disappearing into it. Harry looked at Dudley and smiled tightly running after his aunt. As he neared the barrier he closed his eyes waiting for the crash to come but it never did. He felt someone touch his shoulder and opened his eyes to find Aunt Petunia smiling at him. Before he could say anything Dudley came tumbling through the barrier behind them. Harry laughed as he took in the platform.

It was amazing he'd never thought he would see the like. There were cats of every color wound here and there between legs. Owls hooted to each other in a disgruntled way over the babble and scraping of heavy trunks. The first few carriages were already packed with students, some hanging out of the window to talk to their families, some fighting over seats.

Harry turned back to his family and smiled, "Well, this is it. I'm off, I'll see you guys again at Christmas."

"See you Harry, don't forget to write. I'll be waiting to find out what house you are in." Dudley gave him a bone-crushing hug and Harry patted his cousin gently on the back. Next his aunt stepped in.

"Take care Harry, don't forget to send an owl if you need anything." She gave him a short hug, smiled then left taking Dudley. Harry looked around and found Draco standing nearby saying farewell to his parents with another girl their age. She had light brown hair pinned up neatly and pretty hazel eyes. Harry walked over and smiled.

"Hello Draco told you I'd see you again. Never did get your surname though."

"Harry," He nodded smiling, "It's Malfoy. I want you to meet my parents, Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy. And this is my cousin Arianna Rosier, she's in our year as well."

"Nice to meet you, Mr and Mrs Malfoy, Arianna."

Arianna simply nodded acknowledgment before turning to another girl their age who was tall with blonde hair and blue eyes.

"Nice to meet you too. You must be Mr Potter." Narcissa smiled down at the raven-haired boy.

"Yes, ma'am, I am." Harry smiled and nodded his head.

"My Dear, we have too hurry, we have a meeting to attend." Lucius addressed his wife ignoring his son's new friend.

"Oh yes, I almost forgot. Have a good term Draco dear and you too Ariana darling. Don't forget to write. I'll see you both at Christmas. And nice meeting you Mr Potter, I hope I shall meet you again."

Harry smiled and nodded, "That would be nice."

The couple nodded again at the boys before disappearing from sight. Harry blinked not used to people just disappearing. Draco however just laughed.

"It takes some getting used to. You have to be seventeen though before you can try it though. Come on let's find an empty compartment."

They wheeled their trolleys down the platform and found a compartment in the middle of the train that only had two other boys inside. Both of them were thickset and looked extremely tough. Draco snapped his fingers and they both stood at once coming over to take the four trunks and heave them into the corner of the compartment.

"Harry, this is Crabbe and Goyle. Their fathers are good friends of mine." Draco drawled in his lazy voice.

Harry grinned, "Nice to meet you boys."

Harry and Draco took seats across from each other and spent the next hour getting to know each other. Arianna and Daphne sat in another corner and continued their conversation. It was about twelve

when a smiling, dimpled woman slid back their door and said, "Anything off the trolley, dears?"

Harry, who hadn't eaten breakfast, leapt to his feet only to be pulled back down by his new friend. "Let the human bludgers go first." Draco whispered as Crabbe and Goyle rushed towards the trolley. Harry snickered and nodded his agreement.

The two big boys finished and came waddling back in their arms full of sweets. The girls were next to step up but they bought much less. At this point Harry and Draco stood and headed out. Harry looked over the selection there, there were Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans, Droobles Best Blowing Gum, Chocolate Frogs, Pumpkin Pasties, Cauldron Cakes, Liquorice Wands and a number of other strange things Harry had never seen in his life. Looking towards Draco for assistance he smiled uncertainly.

"What's good, Draco?" Draco paused and looked at Harry in surprise.

"You've never tried this stuff before? Oh, well then, if you're hungry then Pumpkin Pasties is a good place to start. Chocolate Frogs are also nice and I'd get a bag of Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans too."

"Thanks," Harry smiled and nodded before turning to the woman with the trolley, "I'll have two Pumpkin Pasties, five Chocolate Frogs and one Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans."

Harry paid the woman and carried his food back to his seat. He took a bite out of a Pumpkin Pasty and sighed. Finishing the pasty off Harry picked up a pack of Chocolate Frogs, "These aren't real frogs are they?"

"No," said Draco. "It's nice though, besides it's the cards you want. Each pack has a famous witch or wizard. I've almost completed my collection. Why don't you start your own?"

Harry unwrapped his Chocolate Frog and picked up the card. It showed a man's face. He wore half-moon glasses, had a crooked nose and flowing silver hair, beard and moustache. Underneath the picture was the name Albus Dumbledore.

“So this is Dumbledore,” said Harry sneered.

“I’ve got about five of him. You know he’s not as great as everyone makes him out to be. Father always said that he was the worst thing to happen to Hogwarts.”

“I know! My aunt dislikes him as well.”

They ate in silence as Harry continued to open his Chocolate Frogs. Soon he not only had Dumbledore, but Morgana, Paracelsus, Circe and Merlin. He finally put the cards away in his trunk and opened a bag of Bertie Bott’s Every-Flavour Beans.

“I’d be careful with those. When they say every flavour, they mean EVERY flavour.” Draco said putting emphasise on the word every.

Harry tried a few anyway and got toast, coconut, baked bean, strawberry, curry, garlic, coffee and sardine. The countryside now flying past the window was becoming wilder. The neat fields were gone. Now there were woods, twisting rivers and dark green hills.

There was a knock on the door of their compartment and a round-faced boy came in. He looked tearful.

“Sorry,” he said, “but have you seen a toad at all?”

They just shook their heads and ignored him. The boy left crying.

“I don’t know why he’s so bothered,” said Draco, “It’s just a toad.”

Harry shrugged and looked at the other boys who were still eating, “Do they ever stop?”

“Not really, I’ve known them for years now and...” Draco shook with laughter, “...they are just like that.”

Laughing Harry shook his head and packed up the rest of his snacks for later. He picked out his potions book and looked over it again. He wanted to be prepared for anything. Draco had also taken out a text

book and they read in silence until they were disturbed again. The toad boy was back but this time he had a girl with him. She was already wearing her new Hogwarts robes.

"Has anyone seen a toad? Neville's lost one," she said. She had a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair and rather large front teeth.

"We've already told him we haven't seen it," said Harry who was starting to get annoyed. But the girl wasn't listening; she was looking at the books in their hands.

"Oh, are you studying already?"

She sat down between Crabbe and Draco who inched away as though she had the plague. "I've already learnt all of our books off by heart, of course, I just hope it will be enough. Because nobody in my family's magic at all, it was ever such a surprise when I got my letter. I'm Hermione Granger, by the way, and this is Neville Longbottom, who are you?" She gestured to the boy standing uncertainly in the doorway.

Draco drawled, "The name's Malfoy, Draco Malfoy."

"Harry, Harry Potter." Harry grinned casually flicking his hair to give a small glimpse of his famous scar. He winked at Draco who smirked back. Arianna just shook her head and ignored them.

Neville froze upon hearing Draco's name, "Eh, maybe I should get going."

Harry shook his head and gestured to the spot next to him. "Come sit, I hear our parents were good friends once." Harry recalled the name from one of his conversations with his aunt.

Harry and Draco talked to Neville and started bringing him out of his shell. Even Draco had to admit that Neville was okay, at least he's a pureblood Draco thought. Soon enough Neville gained the confidence he needed to become the pureblood heir that he was. They continued ignoring Hermione's efforts to be included. Eventually she left them

behind huffing and puffing in anger. Harry peered out of the window. It was getting dark. He could see mountains and forests under a deep-purple sky. The train did seem to be slowing down. The boys stood and put their books away, Neville left to get his trunk but promised to catch up with them later.

Harry took off their jackets whilst Draco took off his casual robe and they both pulled on their long black Hogwarts robes. A voice echoed through the train: "We will be reaching Hogwarts in five minutes' time. Please leave your luggage on the train, it will be taken to the school separately."

They stood and neatened themselves up then closing their trunks they followed Crabbe and Goyle out. They joined the crowd thronging the corridor. The train slowed right down and finally stopped. Crabbe and Goyle pushed their way towards the door clearing a path for the rest of them. Harry shivered in the cold night air as he stepped out onto the tiny, dark platform. Then a lamp came bobbing over the heads of the students and Harry heard a voice: "Firs'-years! Firs'-years over here!"

Harry jumped when he spotted big hairy face beaming over the sea of heads. He had no idea who that was but somehow he didn't want to know.

"C'mon, follow me – any more firs'-years? Mind yer step, now! Firs'-Years, follow me!"

Slipping and stumbling they followed the giant down what seemed to be a steep narrow path. It was so dark either side of them that Harry thought there must be thick trees there. Nobody spoke much. Neville finally caught up with Harry and Draco almost running to keep up with them. They nodded in greeting not wanting to say a word.

"Yeh'll get yer firs' sight o' Hogwarts in a sec," the giant called over his shoulder.

There was a loud "Ooooooh!"

The narrow path had opened up suddenly on to the edge of a great black lake. Perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers.

“No more’n four to a boat!” The giant called, pointing to a fleet of little boats sitting in the water by the shore. Harry, Draco, Neville and a weeding-looking boy, who introduced himself as Theodore Nott took one boat whilst Crabbe, Goyle, Arianna and Daphne piled into another.

“Everyone in?” shouted the giant, who had a boat to himself. “Right then – forward!”

And the fleet of little boats moved off all at once, gliding across the lake, which was as smooth as glass. Everyone was silent, staring up at the great castle overhead. It towered over them as they sailed nearer and nearer to the cliff on which it stood.

“Heads down!” yelled the giant as the first boats reached the cliff; they all bent their heads and the little boats carried them through a curtain of ivy, which hid a wide opening in the cliff face. They were carried along a dark tunnel, which seemed to be taking them right underneath the castle until they reached a kind of underground harbour where they clambered out on to rocks and pebbles.

“Oh, you there! Is this your toad?” said the giant, who was checking the boats as people climbed out of them.

Neville smiled holding his hands out to take his toad. Then they clambered up a passageway in the rock after the lamp. Coming out at last on to smooth, damp grass right in the shadow of the castle. They walked up a flight of stone steps and crowded around the huge, oak front door.

“Everyone here?”

The giant raised a gigantic fist and knocked three times on the castle door.

The door swung open at once. A tall, black-haired witch in emerald-green robes stood there. She had a very stern face and Harry's first thought was that this was not someone to cross.

"The first-years, Professor McGonagall," said the giant.

"Thank you, Hagrid. I will take them from here."

She pulled the door wide. The entrance hall was so big you could have fitted the whole of the Dursley's house in it. The stone walls were lit with flaming torches like the ones at Gringotts, the ceiling was too high to make out, and a magnificent marble staircase facing them led to the upper floors.

They followed professor McGonagall across the flagged stone floor. Harry could hear the drone of hundreds of voices from a doorway to the right – the rest of the school must already be here – but Professor McGonagall showed the first-years into a small empty chamber off the hall. They crowded in, standing rather closer together than they would usually have done, peering about nervously.

Chapter 4: The Sorting

"Welcome to Hogwarts," said Professor McGonagall. "Now, in a few moments you will pass through these doors and join your classmates. But before you take your seats, you must be sorted into your houses. They are Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Now while you're here your house will be like your family. Your triumphs will earn you points. Any rule breaking and you will lose points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the house cup. The Sorting Ceremony will begin momentarily."

She left the chamber. Harry sighed, he just wanted to get this over with.

"How are we to be sorted?" Neville asked him

Before Harry could answer Arianna spoke up, "You just have to put some sort of hat on your head. I read about it in Hogwarts: A History."

"It's called the sorting hat, it looks inside your head and looks at your abilities and puts you in the best house." Harry grinned at Arianna, "I read it too."

Nodding Arianna smiled slightly, as she was about to say something several people behind her screamed. "What the – ?"

Harry gasped and so did a couple of people around him although Arianna and Draco didn't look too surprised. About twenty ghosts had just streamed through the back wall. Pearly-white and slightly transparent, they glided across the room talking to each other and hardly glancing at the first-years. They seemed to be arguing. What looked like a fat little monk was saying, "Forgive and forget, I say, we ought to give him a second chance –"

"My dear friar, haven't we given peevies all the chances he deserves? He gives us all a bad name and you now he's not really even a ghost – I say, what are you all doing here?"

A ghost wearing a ruff and tights had suddenly noticed the first-years. Nobody answered him.

"New students!" said the Fat Friar, smiling around at them. "About to be sorted, I suppose?"

A few people nodded mutely.

"Hope to see you in Hufflepuff!" said the Friar. "My old house, you know."

"Move along now," said a sharp voice. "The Sorting Ceremony's about to start."

Professor McGonagall had returned. One by one the ghosts floated away through the opposite wall.

"Now, form a line," Professor McGonagall told the first-years, "and follow me."

Feeling rather excited Harry got into line behind Draco, with Neville behind him, and they walked out of the chamber, back across the hall and through a pair of double doors into the Great Hall.

Harry never thought that it was this splendid. It was lit by thousands and thousands of candles that were floating in mid-air over the four long tables where the rest of the students were sitting. These tables were laid with glittering golden plates and goblets. At the top of the hall was another long table where the teachers were sitting. Professor McGonagall led the first-years up here, so that they came to a halt in a line facing the other students, with the teachers behind them. The hundreds of faces staring at them looked like pale lanterns in the flickering candlelight. Dotted here and there among the students, the ghosts shone misty silver.

Harry continued looking straight as professor McGonagall silently placed a four-legged stool in front of the first-years. On top of the stool she put a pointed wizard's hat. This hat was patched and frayed and extremely dirty. Then the hat twitched. A rip near the brim opened wide like a mouth – and the hat began to sing:

“Oh, you may not think me pretty,

But don't judge on what you see,

For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat.

There's nothing hidden in your head

The Sorting Hat can't see,

So try me on and I'll you

Where you ought to be.

You might belong in Gryffindor,

Where dell the brave at hear,

Their daring, nerve and chivalry

Set Gryffindors apart.

You might be in Hufflepuff,

Where they are just and loyal,

Those patient Hufflepuffs are true

And unafraid of toil;

Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,

If you've a ready mind,

Where those of wit and learning,

Will always find their kind;

Or perhaps in Slytherin

You'll make you real friends,

Those cunning folk use any means

To achieve their ends.

So put me on! Don't be afraid!

The whole Hall burst into applause as the hat finished its song. It bowed to each of the four tables and then became quite still again. Now Professor McGonagall stepped forward holding a long roll of parchment.

"When I call your name, you will put on the hat and sit on the stool to be sorted," She said. "Abbott, Hannah!"

A pink-faced girl with blonde pigtails stumbled out of line, out on the hat, which fell right down over her eyes, and sat down. A moment's pause –

“HUFFLEPUFF!” shouted the hat.

The table on the right cheered and clapped as Hannah went to sit down at the Hufflepuff table. Harry saw the ghost of the Fat Friar waving merrily at her.

Another girl joined the Hufflepuff table before a Terry Boot joined the table second from the left whom Harry took to be the Ravenclaws. The sorting continued as the first Gryffindor, “Brown, Lavender” Joined the table on the far left. “Bulstrode, Millicent” Became the first Slytherin joining the table second from the right.

Harry tuned out for a while taking in the ceiling that looked like the night sky. He was jerked out of his thoughts when Neville was called forward. Harry smiled at his new friend and patted his back. Neville walked confidently up to the stool and put the hat on his head. The hat took quite a long while to decide. When it finally shouted “Slytherin”, Neville stood and took the hat off and walked slowly over to the table where Crabbe and Goyle now sat. The room was silent, but as Crabbe and Goyle made room for him. The Slytherin table cheered its newest member.

Malfoy strolled forward confidently when his name was called and was sorted almost at once: the hat had barely touched his head when it screamed, “SLYTHERIN!”

Malfoy went over and sat opposite Neville shaking his hand. Harry smirked slightly as he realised that Draco had purposely left a seat between him and the next person. Obviously the seat was meant for Harry. Finally Professor McGonagall called his name –

“Potter, Harry!”

As Harry stepped forward, whispers suddenly broke out like little hissing fires all over the hall. Ignoring the rest of the students Harry pulled the hat onto his head and waited.

“Hmm,” Said a small voice in his ear. “Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage I see. Not a bad mind either. There’s talent, oh my goodness, yes – and a nice thirst to prove yourself...so where shall I put you?”

Harry remained silent not knowing what to say, sure he wanted to join his new friends but he knew his parents would turn over in their grave if he became a Slytherin. Unsure he shrugged and decided to let the hat decide.

“What? Nothing to say? This could determine your future. You could be great, you know, it’s all here in your head, and Slytherin will help you on the way to greatness, no doubt about that...”

“...Well then put me there...”

“Very well! I look forward to seeing your progress. Now I shall put you in SLYTHERIN”

Harry heard the hat shout the last word to the whole Hall. He took the hat off and walked confidently towards the Slytherin table. He smirked slightly as he noticed the whole hall had gone silent. But not for long as his new friends, Draco and Neville stood up from the Slytherin table and began cheering him on. Soon enough the whole table followed. Harry slid into the seat Draco had saved for him and shook the hand of the Slytherin Prefect who introduced himself as Marcus Flint.

He could see the High Table properly now. At the other end of the table from Harry he could see Hagrid crying into a large dirty handkerchief. Snickering softly he moved his gaze along to the centre of the table where, in a large gold chair, sat Albus Dumbledore. Harry recognised him from the Chocolate Frog card immediately. He was frowning down at Harry as though he had done something wrong which annoyed Harry more than he wanted to admit. A little further down the table sat a professor with greasy black hair, a hooked nose and sallow skin who raised his goblet in Harry’s direction. Taking a guess as to who it was Harry returned the gesture with a nod.

“Rosier, Arianna!”

Harry turned back to the ceremony and watched as Draco's cousin was put into Ravenclaw. The last person to be sorted was a Slytherin called, "Zabini, Blaise". Harry clapped along with the rest of the table as Blaise joined them. There were ten students in Slytherin this year. Besides Harry and his little gang there were two other boys, Blaise and Theodore Nott. There were three girls, Pansy Parkinson, a pug-faced girl with dark black hair, Daphne Greengrass, Arianna's friend and lastly Millicent Bulstrode, something of a female version of Crabbe or Goyle.

After everyone was introduced to each other Harry paused and realized just how hungry he was. The pumpkin pasties seemed ages ago.

Albus Dumbledore had got to his feet. He was beaming at the students, although one could tell something was disturbing him.

"Welcome!" he said. "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! Thank you!"

He sat back down and Harry started laughing, he looked at Draco and the both spoke one word: mad, before cracking up again. Harry turned to Marcus who was seated next to him asking if Dumbledore was always this mad.

"Mad?" he said curiously. "Yes you could say that. I like to think of it as insane, but I guess it is close enough. Potatoes, Harry?" He smiled indulgently.

Harry's mouth fell open. The dishes in front of him were now piled with food. When had that happened? Harry wondered as he accepted the plate of potatoes from Marcus muttering his thanks as he started eating quickly but neatly. After all it was Aunt Petunia who had trained him in table manners. As he ate he talked to his new companions and it seemed that Harry was the only first-year Slytherin who wasn't a pureblood. Everyone assured him that it didn't matter but he knew better. Slytherins were notorious for their discrimination against non-purebloods.

Harry had finished eating and chanced another glance at the head table and noticed the same professor watching him. He nudged Draco in the side, "Hey, who's that professor staring at us?"

Draco swallowed a mouthful of bacon and took a drink looking at the head table, "Oh, that's Professor Snape. He's our head of house, the potions professor." He then turned back to the table as the plates cleared and the puddings appeared.

Harry piled a couple of chocolate éclairs, treacle tarts and some ice cream onto his plate as he recalled all the things his aunt had mentioned about him. He was the first one to tell his mother that she was a witch. Harry looked at the professor in awe as he chewed on a chocolate éclair, so this man knew his mother from way back.

At last the puddings disappeared and Professor Dumbledore got to his feet again. The hall fell silent.

"I have a few start-of-term notices I wish to announce. The first years please note that the Dark Forest is strictly forbidden to all students. Also, our caretaker, Mr. Filch, has asked me to remind you that the third floor corridor on the right hand side is out of bounds to all who do not wish to die a most painful death. Thank you." He sat back down as the prefects stood to lead the first-years out of the Great Hall.

Harry and Draco followed Marcus along with the rest of their new friends. They headed down stairs towards the dungeons. After several dark hallways they came to a stop by a stretch of bare, damp stonewall.

"Serpent's Blood." Marcus said and a stone door concealed in the doorway slid open. He marched through it as everyone else followed. The Slytherin common room was a long, low underground room with rough stonewalls and ceiling, from which round, greenish lamps were hanging on chains. A fire was crackling under an elaborately carved mantelpiece ahead of them, and several Slytherins were already there gossiping after the summer break.

"Now, boys' dormitories are upstairs to the door on the left and girls' the same on the right. Before I let you head to bed there are a few

rules that you need to know as new Slytherins. We Slytherins are to act elegant and composed at all times. There will be no fooling around, you bear the crest of Slytherin now and your actions will reflect upon the entire house and in Slytherin we believe strongly in unity. Remember that. In Slytherin, it is all about house pride, honour and loyalty.

“As many of you already know, our head of house is Professor Snape, who will also be your potions professor. You will all treat him with respect and assume the proper behaviour I’m sure you have all learned when in his presence.

“He is our mentor and our keeper. He will show us the proper discipline and obedience. He not only teaches us much but he also cares for us. Any problems you have shall be addressed first to me; if I am unable to answer your question I shall pass you on to him. Any questions?” He asked seriously as the first-years all shook their heads. Then he nodded and headed upstairs to what they assumed was his room.

The girls waved goodnight as the boys headed to upstairs on the left side, they found the door that said first-year boys and opened the door. They found another two doors their each with a couple of names on them. The door on the right said: N. Longbottom, D. Malfoy and H. Potter. The other door had the names: V. Crabbe, G. Goyle, T. Nott and B. Zabini.

Harry, Draco and Neville opened the door on the right and peered at what was to be their dorm for the next seven years. It was a fairly big room; there were three poster beds with silky emerald-green hangings. At the foot of each bed was a trunk; each bed had a bedside table next to it and a wardrobe opposite it. Directly opposite the door they had just entered was another door, which presumably led to the bathroom. Looking at the trunks they found Draco closest to the bathroom and Neville close to the door with Harry in the middle.

Too tired to talk they silently unpacked and changed into their pyjamas. Muttering quick goodnights they fell into bed and were asleep within seconds.

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A/N: Just a couple of things, Arianna is Draco's second cousin. I'm basing this on the black family tree. Also, for those who haven't yet noticed, Harry is studious and intelligent.

Chapter 5: Potions Master

Whispers followed Harry from the moment he left his dormitory the next day. Harry was glad of his new friends who helped deflect the worse of them. As he walked through the corridors he was flanked by Draco on one side and Neville on the other, Crabbe and Goyle followed and flexed their muscles threateningly at anyone who tried to approach them.

Luckily Harry was enjoying the classes which took his mind off the worst. A couple of classes weren't so great though, they had to study the night skies through their telescopes every Wednesday at midnight and learn the names of different stars and the movements of the planets. Easily the most boring lesson was History of Magic, which was the only class taught by a ghost. Harry spent the majority of the classes simply reading the textbook along with any other reference books he could find and taking notes. He also convinced Draco and Neville to do the same.

Professor Flitwick, the Charms teacher, was a tiny little wizard who had to stand on a pile of books to see over his desk. At the start of their first lesson he took the register, and when he reached Harry's name he gave an excited squeak and toppled out of sight.

Professor McGonagall was again different. Harry had been quite right to think she wasn't a teacher to cross. Strict and clever, she gave them a talking-to the moment they had sat down in her first class.

"Transfiguration is some of the most complex and dangerous magic you will learn at Hogwarts," She said. "Anyone messing around in my class will leave and not come back. You have been warned."

Then she changed her desk into a pig and back again. They were all very impressed and couldn't wait to get started, but soon realized that they won't be changing the furniture into animals for a long time. After taking a lot of complicated notes, they were each given a match and started trying to turn it into a needle. By the end of the lesson, only two people (Harry and Theo) had made any difference to their match; Professor McGonagall showed everyone how both matches had gone all silver and pointy and gave the pair a rare smile.

The class everyone was dreading was Defense Against the Dark Arts, it seemed they were justified as Quirrell's lessons turned out to be a bit of a joke. Harry found only one benefit of attending that class as it was held with the Ravenclaws and he took the opportunity to get to know them and compare notes. He becomes good friends with Terry Boot, Arianna Rosier and Anthony Goldstein.

Friday finally came around and Harry was bouncing with excitement, today was the day they had Double Potions with the Gryffindors. Harry was excited mainly because he was very interested in the subject but also because it would be the first time he met his famous head of house.

Harry had just sat down to breakfast and piled some bacon onto his plate when the post arrived. Harry wasn't fazed by it anymore, he had been a little shocked on the first morning but soon learned to ignore it. Hedwig had yet to return from sending his letter to the Dursleys and he didn't think she'd be back for a couple of days. As it happened she flew in this morning and dropped two letters into his lap. Recognizing his cousin's lopsided script he made to open that one first.

Dear Harry,

I'm glad you're enjoying your new school. Smelting is rather boring at the moment. Piers never leaves me alone and I can't beat him up or else mother will be mad. Anyway I'm so glad I had your help over the summer, the classes here are getting harder by the day. Mum wants to write something now.

Harry, hello dear. It's Aunt Petunia here. Just wanted to say how glad I am that you are settling well into your new house and school. I know both of your parents were Gryffindors and you might be disappointed but I'm here to tell you not to be. They will be proud of you no matter what, and I am proud in their place. I have sent another letter along with Hedwig, it is from Remus.

All my love,

Aunt Petunia.

Dudley

Harry grinned at the letter feeling better, he hadn't really been disappointed about being in Slytherin but he did have some doubts in the back of his head. Now that he was set at ease he took a bite of his bacon as he opened the next letter.

Dear Harry,

I hear you were accepted into Slytherin. Congratulations, now I know you might be a little upset about not being in Gryffindor like your parents and myself. Nonetheless, Slytherin is a fine house and your parents would have loved you no matter what. I'll be with your aunt and cousin the day you return from Hogwarts for the Christmas holidays to pick you up. We can talk about it a bit more then.

Looking forward to seeing you again,

Remus J. Lupin

Harry frowned as he folded the letter and pushed it into his book bag with the other letter. Remus had given him much to think about. He finished his breakfast and left waiting for his friends to catch up. Potions took place down in the dungeons not too far from the common room, Harry sat between Draco and Neville in the front row.

Snape, like Flitwick, started the class by taking the register, and like Flitwick, he paused at Harry's name.

"Ah, yes," He said softly, "Harry Potter, you finally join us. Maybe you can help bring up the standard of this class. Your mother was great in this class, hopefully you can match her talent."

Snape finished calling the names and looked up at the class. His eyes were black and were cold and empty and brought to mind dark tunnels.

"You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potion-making," He began. He spoke in a whisper but they caught every

word – like Professor McGonagall, Snape had the gift of keeping a class silent without effort. “As there will be no foolish wand-waving here, many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses...I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death -- if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach.”

More silence followed this speech. Harry sat straight and maintained his concentration as he wanted to show the Professor that he wasn't a dunderhead. Draco and Neville maintained the same pose as well whilst out of the corner of his eye Harry saw the Gryffindors giving each other fearful looks.

“Potter!” said Snape suddenly. “What would I get if I added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?”

Harry immediately recalled the answer from his reading and looked the Professor in the eye as he answered ignoring the bouncing girl sitting behind him.

“When powdered root of asphodel is added to an infusion of wormwood it makes a sleeping potion so powerful it is known as the Draught of Living Death.”

“Very good Mr Potter! Nice to see some of my students taking their classes seriously. Five points for Slytherin. Next, how about you Mr Weasley? Where would you look if I told you to find me a bezoar?”

Ron Weasley, a tall, thin and gangly boy with freckles and a mass of red hair, wasn't happy about Harry being in Slytherin much less knowing something he didn't.

“I don't know sir, why don't you go ask Potter or better yet ask Hermione. She does.” Hermione was reaching as far up into the air as possible without leaving her seat.

“Sit down,” He snapped at Hermione. “Five points from Gryffindor for your cheek, Weasley. Potter, maybe you can answer the question for me.”

“Yes sir, a Bezoar is a stone that can be taken from the stomach of a goat. And it will save you from most potions.”

“Very good Mr Potter. Another five points, now let’s try the Gryffindors again shall we? Last question, Mr Finnigan! What is the difference between monkwood and wolfsbane?”

A sandy-haired boy sitting next to Ron scowled, “I don’t know, but obviously Hermione does, why not ask her?” Hermione had lowered her hand but she was still bouncing about eager to answer a question.

Snape smirked at her but didn’t comment instead turning to his attentive snakes on the other side of the room. “Hm...How about we try...ah, Longbottom!”

“Monkwood and wolfsbane are the same plant, which also goes by the name of aconite.” Neville answered promptly glad that his friends had convinced him to study.

“Very good, take another five points for Slytherin and Gryffindors note a point will be taken from your house for your lack of decorum, Granger.”

Things didn’t improve for the Gryffindors as the lesson continued. Snape put them all into pairs and set them up to mixing up a simple potion to cure boils. He swept around in his long black cloak, watching them weight dried nettles and crush snake fangs, criticizing almost everyone except a few Slytherins, namely Harry, Draco, Neville and Blaise who had been paired up together. He commented on the perfect way Draco had stewed his horned slugs and was about to comment on Harry’s potion when clouds of acid green smoke and a loud hissing filled the dungeon. Seamus had somehow managed to melt Dean’s cauldron into a twisted blob and their potion was sweeping across the stone floor, burning holes in people’s shoes. Seamus, who had been drenched in the potion, moaned in pain as angry red boils sprang up all over his arms and legs.

“Idiot boy!” snarled Snape, clearing the spilled potion with one wave of his wand “I suppose you added the porcupine quills before taking the cauldron off the fire?”

Seamus didn't answer, he simply whimpered as the boils spread to his face.

“Take him to the hospital wing,” Snape spat at Dean. Then he rounded on Ron and Hermione, who had been working next to Dean and Seamus.

“You – Weasley – why didn't you tell him not to add the quills? That's another point you've lost for Gryffindor.”

Harry snickered quietly as he watched the boy's face turn red, it was hard to tell where his hairline starts. An hour later, class was finished and Harry was asked to stay behind. It was fairly obvious that Harry and Draco were both favorites already.

“Mr Potter, no doubt your aunt has mentioned me in the past.” Snape drawled leaning against his desk.

“Yes sir she did something along the lines of the first wizard she ever saw.”

“Yes, it was I myself who told your mother of her being a witch. Now, I have something important to tell you and I trust you will keep it to yourself. That means no telling Malfoy or Longbottom.”

“Of course sir.”

“Okay, after I told your mother of her abilities we became best friends as we lived close together. When we reached Hogwarts as you know she became a Gryffindor and I followed my father into Slytherin. Time and house rivalries got between us, we became more distant. Although your mother wasn't speaking to me at the time I had fallen in love with her. I loved her silently for five years while I watched her fall in love with your father and get married. On the day she died I swore a wizard's vow that I would do anything I could to protect her

son. I contacted your aunt and made sure you had a good comfortable home...”

Harry was speechless, he admired the man that was for sure but now even more so as he thought of the pain he must have gone through.

“...What I’m trying to say is that I’ll die to protect you if necessary. In return I want you to come see me if you have any problems. I wouldn’t usually have told you this but I decided it would be better to be honest from the beginning.”

Harry nodded and smiled, “Yes sir, thank you...I’m not quite sure what to say.”

“That would do for now, hurry along to your next class and take this note for Professor Flitwick although I believe you are already a favorite.” Snape handed a piece of parchment and gave Harry a very rare smile.

Nodding in reply Harry took the parchment and left the room. He walked into Charms late and handed the Professor the note before taking his usual seat in between Draco and Neville. By unspoken agreement they had dubbed Harry their leader. After lunch they had the afternoon off so they agreed to meet in the Library to study. At two Slytherin’s new Golden Trio met up with some other friends including Daphne, Blaise, Theo and Harry’s Ravenclaw friends, Terry Boot, Arianna Rosier and Anthony Goldstein.

They found a large table in the back of the library and went about finishing their homework for the week. By the time they headed for dinner in the Great Hall Harry had ensured everyone was able to turn their match -

into a perfect needle. Harry himself had managed that and had moved on to the levitation charm and was able to make the newly transfigured needles fly around the table. Everyone had finished all the required essays, it was made easier by the fact that they had so many people together, each person had a specialty. Harry was good at the practical side of magic, Neville was good at Herbology, Blaise was good at Transfiguration, Draco was good at Potions and Arianna

was good at charms. And then everyone else was fairly good in all subjects. They all agreed that this arrangement was beneficial for all of them and so agreed to meet up every Friday afternoon.

Chapter 6: Flying Lessons

It was the weekend and Harry was teaching his two new best friends how to play muggle soccer. Surprisingly Neville was quite good. Harry had just scored a goal on Draco when Daphne came down calling out to them.

“Hey guys! There’s a notice on the bulletin board that you need to see.” Looking at each other Harry floated the soccer ball into his arms and they walked quickly up the hill and back inside the school. They entered the Common Room to find Millicent and Pansy arguing in front of the bulletin board. Harry walked over and looked at the note which caused him to smirk.

“Guys, it’s our opportunity to put those little Gryffindors in their place.” Draco grinned as he read over Harry’s shoulder. They smirked at each other as a thought came to mind.

Harry was sick of Seamus Finnegan bragging about he spend most of his childhood zooming around on his broom. And Ron was no better, talking about how he played with his brothers. Draco, had complained about first-years not being allowed to have broomsticks and Harry had to agree. Neville however had never touched a broomstick in his life. Harry felt that this was a bad move on his grandmother’s part. Neville had a lot more potential then she gives him credit for.

At Breakfast on Thursday they all had bets on how long it was until a Gryffindor fell off his broom. Harry was pointedly ignoring Pansy’s attempt to engage him in conversation as he watched the owls come in. It wasn’t that he disliked her exactly he’d just would have found it nice if she wasn’t all over him all the time. Malfoy’s eagle owl had come in again bringing him sweets which he shared around. He had just sent Hedwig to the Dursley’s last night so didn’t think she would be back so soon.

So when he spotted another eagle owl in his direction he was confused till he remembered that Hermes was an eagle owl as well. Dudley had sent along some chocolate as well as a letter telling Harry all about his first week at Smeltings. As they were about to leave a barn owl came in with a small package for Neville from his grandmother. He opened it curiously and found a small glass ball the size of a large marble, which seemed full of white smoke.

"It's a remembrall!" he explained. "Gran knows I forget things – this tells you if there's something you've forgotten to do. You hold it tightly and if it turns red then you've forgotten something." They looked closely but nothing happened the white smoke kept swirling around. Neville put it away and they headed for their first class which was Defence Against the Dark Arts.

At three thirty that afternoon, Harry, Neville, Draco and the other Slytherins headed down the front steps into the grounds for their first flying lesson. The Gryffindors weren't there yet so the Slytherins lined up taking the ten broomsticks on the right. Their teacher, Madam Hooch, arrived. She had short, grey hair and yellow eyes like a hawk.

"Well, what are you all waiting for?" She barked. "Everyone stand by a broomstick. Come on, hurry up."

The Slytherins didn't move as they waited for their Gryffindor counterparts to move. Harry eyed his broom with distain, it was old and some of the twigs stuck out at odd angles.

"Stick out your right hand over your broom," called Madam Hooch at the front, "and say, 'up'"

"UP!" everyone shouted.

Harry's broom jumped into his hand at once, but it was one of the few that did. Draco, Blaise, Daphne had all managed it on the first go. Neville, Theo and the rest of the Slytherins didn't get it until their second or third try. Harry looked over at the Gryffindors and struggled to contain his amusement. No one had managed it on their side, the brooms simply rolled over a few times.

Madam Hooch then showed them how to mount their brooms without sliding off the end, and walked up and down the rows, correcting their grips. Harry and Draco were delighted when she told Seamus he'd been doing it wrong for years.

"Now, when I blow my whistle, you kick off from the ground, hard," said Madam Hooch. "Keep your brooms steady, rise a few feet and then come straight back down by leaning forward slightly. On my whistle – three – two –"

But Hermione, nervous and jumpy and frightened of being left on the ground, pushed off hard before the whistle had touched Madam Hooch's lips.

"Come back, girl!" she shouted, but Hermione was rising straight up. Harry could see her scared white face look down at the ground falling away, saw her gasp, slip sideways off the broom and – WHAM – a thud and a nasty crack and Hermione lay, face down, on the grass in a heap. Her broomstick was still rising higher and higher and started to drift lazily towards the Forbidden Forest and out of sight.

Madam Hooch was bending over Hermione, her face as white as hers.

"Broken wrist," they heard her mutter. "Come on, dear – it's all right, up you get."

She turned to the rest of the class.

"None of you is to move while I take this girl to the hospital wing! You leave those brooms where they are or you'll be out of Hogwarts before you can say 'Quidditch'. Come on, dear."

Hermione, her face tear-streaked, clutching her wrist hobbled off with Madam Hooch, who had her arm around her. No sooner were they out of earshot than Malfoy burst into laughter.

"Did you see her face, the mudblood?"

Harry laughed along with the rest of the Slytherins, he disliked the Gryffindors, she was such a bossy know it all.

“Shut up, Malfoy,” snapped Ron Weasley.

“Oooh, sticking up for Granger?” said Pansy. “Never thought you’d like a dirty little mudblood, Weasley.”

“Look!” said Malfoy, darting forward and snatched something out of the grass. “It’s the stupid mudblood’s bracelet.”

“Give that here Malfoy,” said Seamus quietly. Everyone stopped talking to watch.

Malfoy smiled nastily. “I think I’ll leave it somewhere for Granger to collect – how about – up a tree?”

“Give it here!” Seamus yelled, but Malfoy had leapt onto his broomstick and taken off. Harry had to admit his friend hadn’t been exaggerating when he said he could fly. Hovering level with the topmost branch of an oak he called, “Come and get it, Finnigan!”

Seamus grabbed his broom and shot off turning his broomstick sharply to face Malfoy in mid-air. Malfoy winked down at Harry who grabbed his broom and flew up to join them. Harry paused in mid-air surprised at how easy this was.

“Give it here,” Seamus called, “or I’ll knock you off your broom!”

“Oh yeah?” said Malfoy sneering.

Seamus leant forward and gripped his broom tightly with both hands and it shot towards Malfoy like a Javelin. Malfoy managed to get out of the way easily. Seamus made a sharp turn and held his broom steady.

“Hey, Finnigan how about I make you a deal? If you can catch it before Harry there you can keep it. If not then...well too bad.” He shouted, and he threw the bracelet high into the air and it streaked back towards the ground. Harry saw it fall and leant forward and

pointed his broom handle down. He could hear Seamus behind him trying desperately to catch up. Harry stretched out his hand a foot from the ground, caught it and pulled his broom straight to topple gently onto the grass. He stood and looked at the bracelet curiously.

"Here, give it to your girlfriend." Harry sneered throwing the bracelet at Weasley who caught it stunned. At this point Draco had touched down beside him. And they saw Seamus crash a little way back.

"That was amazing Potter!" Draco said in admiration.

"HARRY POTTER!"

His heart sank fast as he recognized the voice of his head of house. Professor Snape was striding towards them at such a quick speed one would assume he was running. His face however was as blank as ever.

"Potter, follow me, now."

Harry nodded, handed his broom to Malfoy and left without a word. Professor Snape didn't say a word as they went up the front steps and up the marble staircase. Finally Professor Snape stopped outside a classroom. He opened the door and peered inside.

"Professor McGonagall. I need Flint for a moment."

Harry frowned wondering why Professor Snape had called for the Slytherin Prefect. Still Professor Snape remained silent as he led his two students into an empty classroom.

"Flint, I do believe I have found you a Seeker."

Flint's expression changed from confusion to delight.

"Really Professor? But Potter here is only a first-year."

"Absolutely, he was a natural, I've never seen anything like it. That was your first time on a broomstick?"

"Yes sir!" Harry said wondering where this was going. He didn't seem to me getting into trouble so he allowed himself to relax slightly.

"As for the first-year rule I will personally speak to Professor Dumbledore myself. Do you have a broom Potter?"

"Yes sir. I was just bought one for my birthday."

"Very good! Send home for it and good job." He said with a slight smile.

"You're joking."

At dinner time. Harry had just finished telling Draco and Neville what had happened when he left the grounds. Neville was staring at Harry in amazement whilst Draco looked disappointed.

"Seeker?" Neville said, "But first-years never make the house team. You must be the youngest house player in about a century!"

Harry nodded and turned to the silent Draco. "Oh cheer up Draco, I told Flint how good you are and he has agreed to reserve a spot for you on next year's team."

Draco was considerably much happier after that. Harry had barely got more than two bites of his steak pie when the Gryffindor Trio showed up.

"Having a last meal, Potter? When are you getting the train back to the muggles?" Seamus sneered.

"You're a lot braver now that you're on the ground with your little friends." Harry said coolly.

"Fine, I'll take you up on that. Tonight, Wizard's duel. No contact. What's the matter? Scared?"

"Of course he's not," Draco said standing up. "I'm his second, who's yours?"

Seamus looked at Ron and Dean, sizing them up.

“Ron,” he said. “Midnight?”

“Astronomy Tower! You better be there Finnigan or you’ll regret it.”

After Seamus had gone Harry and Draco put their heads together deciding on a plan with Neville’s help.

Chapter 7: Halloween

The following morning Harry and Draco watched as Ron and Seamus stumbled into the great hall as breakfast was coming to a close tired and angry. The Gryffindors glared in the general direction of the Slytherin table and Harry and Draco fought hard to hold their laughter in. But as Hermione Granger ran into the Hall yelling that they had somehow lost a hundred points overnight they lost it and would have fallen out of their chairs had their bodyguards not been holding them.

Up on the head table Professor McGonagall was rigid with anger whilst Professor Snape who had skimmed his student’s minds struggled to contain his amusement. The other professors were looking on with a mixture of curiosity and confusion. Professor Dumbledore however was smiling away as usual with his twinkling blue eyes.

Just then as the Gryffindor table broke out in argument the owls came in, Harry was glad to see Hedwig had returned from the Dursley’s. He opened his note and read it quietly to himself:

Dear Harry,

I’m glad you are doing well at your new school, your Professor Snape wrote explaining your acceptance into your house’s Quidditch team. Congratulations! I have asked Remus to send the broom directly to Professor Snape. You can pick it up at his office later.

Dudley says hi and that he will write with Hermes when he gets a chance, he is swamped with homework at the moment. Uncle Vernon

says hi as well and so does Remus, he just visited again today. We shall see you at Christmas, good luck for your game.

Love,

Aunt Petunia

Harry smiled as he put his letter away and finished off his breakfast. He then led his gang onto Defense Against the Dark Arts where Harry sat with his Ravenclaw friends and discussed their latest piece of Charms homework whispering as Professor Quirrell carried on about the curse of the bogies.

In potions Harry and Draco again made perfect potions and Harry was asked to stay behind. Harry packed his things and stood to attention as he always did when addressing his head of house. Professor Snape actually smiled as he handed Harry his broomstick.

“Now, you are to join the team practice tonight at the pitch at seven, Flint will take you through everything.”

So it was that night that Harry had his first quidditch practice. Flint was practically swooning as he praised Harry, the rest of the team was also awe-struck as they congratulated Harry on his position. Over the next two months Harry was grateful for his study group and all the help they gave him as he struggled to keep up with his studies and the increasing number of quidditch practices. No one had seen him play yet as Flint wished to keep him a secret.

On Halloween morning they woke to the delicious smell of baking pumpkin wafting through the corridors. Even better, Professor Flitwick announced in Charms that they were ready to make objects fly, something they had been looking forward to as they finally got to do some real magic at last. Professor Flitwick split the class into pairs to practice. Harry and Draco were together as usual and both took it in turns making their feather fly in patterns above their heads. Neville was with Daphne and Blaise was with Theo. All three pairs managed to impress Professor Flitwick with their flying feathers whilst Crabbe and Goyle who were a pair managed to set their feather on fire.

Pansy and Millicent however were unable to change their feather at all.

Professor Flitwick awarded Slytherin twenty points and suggested that they move on to the unlocking charm, *alohomora*. They had the time of their lives as they enjoyed the feast that night, hundreds of bats flew around the hall. Just as the food had appeared however Professor Quirrell came sprinting into the Hall, his turban askew and terror on his face. He slumped against the head table and gasped, "Troll – in the dungeons – thought you ought to know."

He sank to the floor in a dead faint. There was uproar from the Gryffindor, Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff tables. The Slytherins just sat there and looked at each other in fear. It took firecrackers from the end of Professor Dumbledore's wand to bring about silence.

"Prefects," he rumbled, "Lead your houses back to the dormitories immediately!"

Flint immediately stood up and silently led the Slytherins back into their common room. They all formed a neat line as they collected their food and found a seat to eat. They talked as they ate about why a troll would be inside Hogwarts.

A/N: Okay I just wanted say thanks to everyone who reads this and reviews you make me feel so loved!! I also want to answer a few questions that were asked by several people.

1) Neville's change has three causes, one because Draco no longer insults him, two Harry made friends with him and three because I like him like that!

2) Harry doesn't treat Hermione bad because she is a muggle-born. He treats her that way because she is bossy and all that. He doesn't like her personality. But that will change

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Chapter 8: Quidditch

As they entered November, the weather turned very cold. Every morning the ground was covered in frost. The quidditch season had begun. On Saturday Harry would playing in his first match after weeks of training: Slytherin versus Gryffindor. The day before Harry's first match found Harry sitting with his Slytherin friends in the Common Room around the fireplace discussing what the outcome of the match would be over some butterbeer. They were all convinced Slytherin were a sure win with Harry on their team.

Whilst Harry was glad of their confidence he was worried that he would let them down. At that moment they saw Professor limping in and asking Marcus Flint something before spotting them and walking over. He took a seat next to Harry and sighed.

"I'd like to talk to Mr Potter alone."

He glared softly at the other Slytherins who nodded and they retreated to the other side of the room. Harry was curious as to why Snape had singled him out, however he waited patiently for his head of house to start.

"Very good Potter! I know your parents and know that you have inherited their curiosity. Now there are some things happening here at

Hogwarts that I feel you need to know about. No doubt you remember Professor Dumbledore's warning about the third corridor; well it is because he had installed a three-headed dog to guard a certain magical artifact."

He paused as his prefect came up and handed him a sheet of paper before leaving again. Professor Snape looked at it, nodded then waited for Flint to leave before he continued.

"As studious as you are, I'm sure you have heard of the Philosopher's stone." At Harry's nod he continued. "Well it is being hidden under the school at this very moment and I strongly recommend you to not go after it no matter what you hear."

"Of course professor!"

"Good, now I have a task for you and your friends should you wish to take it. I'd prefer you didn't tell them everything just yet, if you boys could keep an eye on professor Quirrell for me and tell me of any odd occurrences I will help you in any way I can. Unfortunately I am too visible and am being watched at the moment. Professor Dumbledore is no longer confident about my loyalties."

"I see...Of course we can do this for you sir...when you say Professor Dumbledore is questioning your loyalty...to what exactly sir?"

"Sharp. I cannot explain fully now but will at a later date, know this though, I am loyal to you above anyone else. I want you to remember that always. Now I have to go, good luck for tomorrow!"

After another quick word with Flint he stood and limped out without another word. Harry's friends slowly returned and asked him what the professor had said.

"Let's meet in my dorm tonight after dinner and I will explain everything then. Sorry but I have a lot on my mind at the moment I'll see you all in class later."

Harry picked up his bag, nodded to his friends then stood and left for an empty classroom to think about what he had been just told. He sighed as he heard the thunder of feet passing by that told him class had started. He walked swiftly down the corridors as he headed to his first class of the day, Potions. His day passed uneventfully as he attended his classes and study group. After finishing their homework the group mastered the Alohomora charm whilst Harry read up on the more advanced spells. After dinner Harry's Slytherin friends gathered in his dorm.

"Okay, here are the essentials. Professor Snape wants us to watch Professor Quirrell for him. Now he didn't say why but I agreed anyway, so who is with me?"

Harry was surprised but happy as five hands were raised in the air, he smirked and nodded his appreciation. Next they worked out a schedule for shifts. It went unspoken that they were all to cover for each other, once all had been arranged they all headed to bed as Harry had his first Quidditch match tomorrow.

The next day dawned very bright and cold. The Great Hall was full of the delicious smell of fried sausages and the cheerful chatter of everyone looking forward to a good Quidditch match. Harry's friends were trying to get him to eat something. Just then Terry, Arianna and Anthony came over from the Ravenclaw table to wish him luck.

"Good luck Potter!"

"You'll be great!"

Harry nodded his thanks to excited and nervous to say anything. He took a nibble of his toast as he watched Blaise pile some ketchup onto his sausages.

By eleven o'clock the whole school seemed to be out in the stands around the Quidditch pitch. Many students had binoculars. The seats might be raised high in the air but it was still difficult to see what was going on at times.

Blaise was on Quirrell watch as the rest of the group gathered in the stands with their binoculars to watch and cheer Harry on. Theo was at the time not with them he was running full speed down to the Slytherin changing rooms looking for Harry. He caught Harry just before he entered the room, catching his breath he drew his friend and leader aside and whispered his news.

“I was in Professor Quirrell’s chambers as he got back from breakfast and noticed that he was talking to himself. When I looked for the voice it seemed to have come from the back of his head.”

Harry was silent for a moment as he gave it some thought. Finally he sighed and nodded.

“Keep it to yourself for now, we will tell Professor Snape later and discuss what it could mean then.”

Theo nodded and left as Harry entered the changing room and quickly changed as his teammates waited for him. Harry was silent as he listened intently to Flint’s speech, he wanted to make sure he didn’t stuff anything up. Harry followed Flint as they gathered around Madam Hooch who will be refereeing the match.

“Now I want a nice clean game all of you.” She seemed to be directing this comment to Flint and Harry smirked.

Madam Hooch gave a loud blat on her silver whistle and all fourteen brooms rose at once. A Gryffindor was first to take the Quaffle. Harry circled the pitch looking for the snitch ignoring what went on around him. He spotted it close to the commentator’s box as he heard a yell come up from the Slytherin stands. Shooting his broom in that direction he swerved just in time to dodge a bludger. He sped off and had just wrapped his fingers around the snitch when his broom started playing up.

Blaise gasped as he saw what Quirrell was doing, he drew his wand and with a few well chosen words Blaise’s wand shot bright blue flames onto Professor Quirrell’s robes and waited. It took approximately thirty seconds for Quirrell to realize he was on fire. It

was enough. Up in the air Harry regained control of his broom and was able to touch down gently, snitch clutched tightly in one hand.

Soon enough the rest of the Slytherin team touched down and bombarded him with words of congratulations. That was one of the fastest catches in Hogwart's History. The match had lasted no more than ten minutes. Instead of joining everyone else in the common room for the celebrations Harry and his friends went to see Professor Snape. This time Harry brought the Ravenclaws as well.

Reaching his office Harry knocked and entered as he heard the familiar voice of his head of house. Professor Snape was sitting behind his desk and looked surprised to see the Ravenclaw members of Harry's group. He set his quill down and nodded to the chairs in front of his desk that he had just wordlessly conjured some more.

"What do you have for me?"

"Well first I would like to add three more members to our group, Terry, Arianna and Anthony. Next Theo has discovered that Professor Quirrell was talking to himself and that the voice came from the back of his head. Blaise tells me that it was Professor Quirrell who had jinxed my broom."

"Well done, I would like for you to pay more attention to the conversations Professor Quirrell has with himself. See if you can find out what his plans are. Now I know many of you will have questions so I'll tell you, I have suspicions that person Professor Quirrell is talking head to is in fact the dark lord himself. I know some of your parents will be supporters but you all have a choice. If you cannot work against your parents then you may leave at once, if however you are willing to devote yourself to Harry then you may stay."

No one stood or so much as moved a muscle, Professor Snape smirked softly and continued.

"Very well. As I have told Harry there is a three-headed dog on the third floor corridor. It was once the pet of your gamekeeper, Hagrid. If there is a chance try and find out how best to tame it, because we

might find ourselves going down there to stop him. This is your last task, I want you to study as many new spells as you can. Dueling spells, Charms, Transfiguration and even healing spells. When practicing these spells make sure you are not alone. If things were to go wrong it would be better if someone was there to help.

“That is all for now. I shall see you all next week; I am putting Harry in charge. Any questions?” As no one responded he nodded, “Good, dismissed.”

Professor Snape returned to the parchments on his desk as his first year students let themselves out. Harry then led his friends to an empty classroom to arrange their new tasks, with the addition of the Ravenclaws Harry knew things would be easier. Harry took out a quill and some parchment as everyone found a seat.

“Okay, to do this properly we would need to work together. I will write a new timetable to include our new members. Everyone will get a rest period after their shift, everyone else will be in the library studying new spells. I will be looking into finding a place we can call headquarters. We will use History of Magic and Astronomy to continue studying or finish homework, there will be two of us who will take notes during those classes to share. On our Friday study session we will use as meeting time and to practice new spells. As for the Hagrid matter, I will take care of it myself. Any questions? Good, let's go join the celebrations.”

Everyone stood and headed for the Slytherin Common Room where Harry was greeted like a celebrity. As the weeks passed Harry and his friends continued to study and practice new spells. Whilst most of the group was still working on second year spells Harry had moved on to third year spells.

They had also been monitoring Professor Quirrell's conversations carefully and had discovered what he was waiting for which also answered the question of how to get past the three-headed dog. Professor Quirrell had purchased an enchanted harp that will arrive late in the school year.

In the days before Christmas break Harry put aside his homework in favor of studying and practicing as many new spells as possible. Unlike his friends who all came from old wizarding families with protected estates that allowed them to practice magic without detection Harry was unable to practice magic at home unless Remus was free and able to find another escort to take them to Potter Manor.

On their last evening before the break they met up with Professor Snape to give him an update on their progress. Neville had discovered that the day Professor Quirrell planned his quest was the day that they finished their last exam. Professor Snape thanked them and wished them a good holiday before dismissing them.

“Harry could you stay behind a moment?”

Professor Snape gave Harry a case of potions with instructions to hand them to Remus Lupin. Harry and his friends had a good journey home as they talked, laughed and even studied a bit. When the train pulled into King’s Cross station Harry couldn’t help smiling as he spotted his Aunt and Dudley standing on the platform with a sick-looking Remus.

Bidding his friends farewell Harry collected his luggage and headed over to greet his family.

“Hey Harry, how goes school?”

“Hey D, it’s alright, how yours?”

“Not too bad.”

“Hello Harry dear. How was your semester?”

“Hello Aunt Petunia. It was wonderful. Oh Remus, I have been instructed by Professor Snape to pass this on to you.”

Harry handed the case of potions over and smiled.

“It’s good to see you again. I’m glad you’re enjoying Hogwarts. And please pass my thanks onto your head of house.

“Okay, we need to get going as your uncle is waiting for us to go out to dinner.”

Aunt Petunia started to shoo them out and Remus drew his wand to pile Harry’s various pieces of luggage onto a trolley. Harry nodded his thanks as he listened to Dudley talk about life at Smeltings. They all piled into the car and Aunt Petunia drove them down to a nice restaurant close to home.

“Can we visit Potter Manor?”

“Of course you can! It is yours after all; the house elves have instructions to keep it under perfect working order for you. I’m sure I can find someone who is free over the holidays.”

They had to be careful who they trusted, after the various stories that both Remus and his Aunt Petunia told him Harry decided that there was just something wrong about Dumbledore. And so he decided to start his own side in the war. Harry wanted to bring both Voldemort and Dumbledore down and bring the wizarding world into the next century with more knowledge of muggles. His first supporters had included Remus, his Aunt and Professor Snape, now Harry had his friends as well.

“Great! You’ve been there before right?”

“Are you kidding? Your grandparents used to invite me over for a couple of weeks every summer holidays.”

Harry grinned as he realized he would be able to practice his magic those holidays after all.

“Would I be able to practice my magic there without the ministry detecting any of it?” Harry was too sure of how the enchantments worked.

“Yes you would, I believe I know what you are thinking and yes I can arrange for us to stay for a few days. I might even teach you a few spells myself.”

Chapter 9: Potter Manor

On Christmas day Harry was woken by an excited Dudley running down the stairs. Cramming his glasses on Harry climbed out of his bed and pulled on a jumper. He ran downstairs to where Dudley had already opened two presents.

“Merry Christmas Dudley!”

“Merry Christmas Harry!”

They opened their presents in silence. From his Aunt and Uncle Harry received a new jumper, Dudley gave him a belt that had a holder for his wand. Remus sent him a book on defensive magic. From his friends Harry received an assortment of sweets such as chocolate frogs and every flavor beans and some books on various subjects.

Harry swapped a box of every flavor beans with his cousin for a box of mars bars. It was then that Harry noticed he had one more present. Harry picked it up and felt it, it was very light and soft. He unwrapped it. Something fluid and silvery grey went slithering to the floor, where it lay in gleaming folds. Harry picked up the shining cloth off the floor and threw it around himself. It was strange to touch, like water woven into the material. He was startled when Dudley gave a yell.

“Harry? What happened to you?”

Confused Harry looked down at his feet but they had gone. Harry smirked as he realized what it was, an invisibility cloak. Harry suddenly spotted the note, he looked at the unfamiliar writing and read it to himself.

Your father left this in my possession before he died. It is time it was returned to you. Use it well.

A very Merry Christmas to you.

There was no signature. Harry shrugged and tucked it into his jumper. He collected the rest of his presents and returned them to his room. That night Aunt Petunia cooked up a marvelous feast and they sat down to dinner with their guest, Remus. Remus had become a regular visitor over the last few days. He came over for dinner fairly often and had taken Harry and Dudley out to Diagon Alley a couple of times.

” I’ve organized everything Harry. A friend of mine has agreed to accompany us and to join you. We will leave in two days time and spend the New Year there.”

“Who else is coming aside from your friend?”

“Whoever you want, it is your house.”

“Dudley? Aunt Petunia?”

They both nodded and grinned. Harry knew better then to ask Uncle Vernon who continued eating without saying a word. Harry was excited and immediately started to bombard Remus with questions about what they will be doing.

As they were clearing the table an unfamiliar barn owl flew in and dropped a letter in front of Harry before perching on the back of Remus’ deserted chair. Harry opened the letter excitedly recognizing the familiar writing of his best friend, Neville. It was an invitation to his grandmother’s annual party. It was to be held on the fifth of January just days before they were due to head back to Hogwarts.

Harry wrote a quick note of acceptance and attached it to the owl’s leg. Harry was wondering what he should wear when Remus spoke up.

“Looks like we need to head over to Diagon Alley to get you some dress robes. While we are there we may as well buy you some everyday wizarding robes.”

The next day Remus took them out to Diagon Alley and Harry bought two sets of dress robes, one plain black and white and one a dark green that matched his eyes nicely. He also purchased a couple of ordinary wizarding robes ranging from black to green in color.

At six in the morning they were due to leave for Potter Manor Remus turned up with another wizard. This one was tall, black and bald with a deep slow voice and a single, gold hoop in his ear. Remus introduced him as Kingsley Shacklebolt. After a quick breakfast Remus shrunk the luggage and put them in his pocket. They piled into the car and in half an hour's time they had arrived at a large old manor.

There was a nice garden in the front with a tiled path down the middle. The manor itself had five levels with a flag pole flying a flag that featured a phoenix spread over a rearing lion. Harry assumed that the phoenix and the lion was the Potter's family crest. The manor was facing the east with a north wing, a south wing and a west wing. Harry was positive the castle manor alone would be larger than Hogwarts.

Harry walked towards the gate wondering how to open it as there was no latch. But as he laid a hand on the gate it swung open. Harry almost fell over as he heard fifteen sudden pops. Dudley caught him as they spotted fifteen small creatures bowing to them that had not been there before. The little creatures had bat-like ears and bulging eyes the size of tennis balls, they all wore tea towels with the same creatures flying on the flag.

"Welcome master and master's friends. I am Parry the head elf." The oldest one stood forward and bowed again. He then proceeded to introduce Harry to the rest of the elves although by the time he was finished Harry had forgotten most of their names. "Jade here will be your personal elf as she is the youngest. Please come on in, we will give you a tour of the place."

The rest of the day was spent touring the place, getting to know where everything is, unpacking and settling down. Harry's master suite was located in the west wing that was for family, Dudley and

Aunt Petunia were given a room each in the same wing. Whilst Remus and Kingsley each had their own room in the south wing, Remus having taken the master bedroom as was his right.

Harry and Dudley had fun running around exploring the place. On their second day there Remus took Harry into the dueling chamber and tested Harry's magical abilities. He was very surprised as Harry practiced spells that were two year levels above his own. They trained hard every day and soon enough Harry had completely mastered all of the third year spells on his list.

Harry made use of the manor's extensive library to do some more research, he finished all of his homework and was able to start practicing some fourth year spells although they tired him out slightly. Remus was impressed and told Harry that he was very powerful. During their stay Kingsley had also taught Harry some Auror tricks and spells that were easy enough for his magic to cope with.

Harry had the time of his life and asked to come back again in the Easter holidays. Remus said he will consider it. As they packed up to go home Harry came across a harmonica stashed away in one of the draws of his room. Guessing that it was probably his parents he took it with him. They once again had their luggage shrunk this time by Harry himself who had just learned the spell. They said good bye to the house elves, piled into the car and headed home.

Harry was bouncing with excitement over his first wizarding party as he checked his hair in the mirror. He had gelled his naturally messy hair down and styled it to perfection; along with his new dark green robes Harry was looking very sharp. The door bell rang at that moment signaling the arrival of Harry's escort, Remus and Kingsley. Answering the door Harry smiled at his new friends.

"Hey guys! We going?"

"Hey Harry, yes we are going just as soon as I've spoken to your Aunt so she knows we are leaving."

“Oh, she’s not here. Uncle Vernon took both Aunt Petunia and Dudley off to visit Aunt Marge.”

Nodding Remus took out a broken pair of spectacles out of his pocket and held it out for Harry and Kingsley to touch.

“1...2...3...”

Harry felt a jerk at his navel as the portkey was activated. His feet had left the ground and found himself speeding forward in a howl of wind and swirling color, his finger was stuck to the spectacles as though it was pulling him with a magnetic force. And then his feet slammed into the ground, losing his balance slightly Harry would have fallen had Remus not have been there to catch him.

Regaining his balance Harry looked around; they had arrived in front of a smaller version of Potter Manor that Harry guessed was the Longbottom Manor. Walking down the path in between Remus and Kingsley Harry started spotting some other differences between this place and his own. Reaching the door they waited as a house elf answered it, Neville came strolling down the stairs moments later smiling.

Harry bid Remus and Kingsley farewell as Neville led Harry inside and introduced him to his grandmother. Neville’s grandmother was a formidable looking old witch wearing a nice long green dress and a fox-fur coat.

“Gran, I would like to introduce you to Harry James Potter, one of my best friends at Hogwarts. Harry, this is my grandmother, Agatha Margaret Longbottom.”

“Well Mr Potter, I’m glad to meet you at last. Neville’s told me all about you, he thinks very highly of you. I want to say thank you for helping him with everything. I had always feared that he wouldn’t live up to his parent’s talents but now I have hope.” She smiled and held out a hand for Harry to shake.

“It was my pleasure Mrs. Longbottom, besides I don’t know how I would have made it through Herbology without Neville.” Harry returned her smile and took her hand and gave it a firm shake.

After a little more small talk Neville took Harry to a nice parlor where several of their friends were already sitting inside chatting. Draco, Theo and Blaise were in the middle of some debate whilst Daphne and Arianna sat on the other side of the room giggling. Harry and Neville sat down and joined them as they awaited the arrival of the last two members of the group. Neville’s grandmother came in once in a while to introduce them to some big names in the wizarding world as well as to check in on them. They all left late but had a great time.

Chapter 10: Through the Trapdoor

Harry returned to Hogwarts the day before term started to find his friends had already arrived. Having seen each other just days before it wasn't long before they caught up. As term started Harry found he had less time to study extra spells as Quidditch practice started, Flint was working the team harder than ever before. Even the endless rain that had replaced the snow couldn't dampen the team's spirit. If they lost their next match against Ravenclaw they risk losing the house championship for the first time in seven years.

His friends were starting to work on third year spells as Harry's magic adjusted to the strain of fourth year spells. Harry's professors were all impressed at his level; he outshone everyone else in the year. He had just made an enemy out of Hermione Granger who was sure he was cheating. Harry and his friends were also learning occlumency from Professor Snape. The match with Ravenclaw came and went. Harry had put Slytherin two-hundred points ahead in the house cup by securing the snitch in less than five minutes.

As exams drew closer Harry and his friends drew up their revision timetables and started studying. Unfortunately the teachers were thinking along the same lines and piled on so much homework that the students were forced to spend the Easter Holidays at Hogwarts studying. Harry was not sure how he got through his exams that year as he anxiously reviewed their plans for the day Professor Quirrell will make his move.

For the exams they were supplied with special, new quills which had been bewitched with an anti-cheating spell. They had practical exams as well. Professor Flitwick called them one by one into his class to see if they could make a pineapple tap-dance across a desk. Professor McGonagall watched them turn a mouse into a snuff-box. Snape watched them very closely as they tried to brew a perfect forgetfulness potion.

Their last exam was History of Magic. One hour of answering questions about old wizards who'd invented self-stirring cauldrons and they'd be done. When Professor Binns told them to put their

quills down and roll up their parchments the room erupted in cheers although the Slytheirns did not join in.

“I’m glad that’s over,” Harry said as they joined the crowds flocking out into the sunny grounds.

Draco and Neville disliked going over exams afterwards so Harry went over their plans as the trio headed to a secluded place near the border of the forest. The group will be split into two. Harry, Draco, Neville and Arianna will be the ones going under the trapdoor whilst Daphne, Terry, Anthony and Blaise were on lookout duty. Theo however had his own job, as the only person besides Harry to own an invisibility cloak Harry appointed him the job of runner, he was to go back and forth between the third corridor and Professor Snape’s office with the messages and news.

They met up with the rest of the group in Professor Snape’s classroom, which was their unofficial headquarters whenever there wasn’t a class. The group spent the afternoon practicing spells, re-reading -their notes and resting for that night. After dinner Harry and his friends sat apart from everyone else in the common room anxiously re-reading their notes as they waited for the last Slytherin to leave for bed. Professor Snape had issued a curfew that night so that they could get going earlier.

As soon as the last person had left Harry and his friends packed their books and started getting ready. Harry and Theo took out their cloaks and cast it around themselves. Draco and Neville joined Harry under his cloak whilst Blaise and Daphne joined Theo under his. The six Slytherins made their way slowly upstairs. Fortunately they didn’t run into anyone on the way. Reaching their destination they took off the cloaks to find the Ravensclaws waiting for them.

Without a word they got into position, Anthony will remain in the room with Fluffy and the Harmonica whilst Terry will be his backup on the other side of the door. Daphne and Blaise will be posted along the corridor to pass the news onto Theo. Anthony started to play the Harmonica as Arianna unlocked the door. Ignoring the silent Harp that lay near the dog’s front paw Harry opened the trapdoor and drooped down.

Flump. With a muffled sort of thump he landed on something soft. Harry sat up and felt around, his eyes not yet adjusted to the gloom. It felt like some sort of plant.

“It’s ok!” he called up to the light that was the trapdoor, he heard three more thumps as Draco, Neville and Arianna joined him. The light above faded as Anthony closed the trapdoor.

“What is this thing?” Draco called somewhere on his left.

“Wow!” Someone gasped, Harry guessed it was Neville.

Snake like tendrils started twisting itself around the four students. Draco started losing his breath as one curled itself around his chest.

“Stop moving!” Neville called. “I know what it is...just give me a second...”

“Hurry up!” Draco wheezed.

Harry and Arianna were both paralyzed now as the plant tightened its grip. Neville being the only one with access to his wand drew it now and muttered a few carefully selected words. Blue flames shot from his wand towards the plant and released Harry and Draco who in turn drew their wands and freed Neville and Arianna.

“This way.” Said Arianna pointing down a stone passageway which was the only way on. All they could hear as they proceeded down the corridor was the gentle drip of water down the walls. The passageway sloped downwards and Harry heard something. A soft rustling and clinking sound seemed to be coming from up ahead.

“Can you guys hear that?” Neville asked.

“Yeah...sounds like wings to me.”

“There’s a light ahead – I can see something moving.” That was Arianna on his left.

They reached the end of the passageway and saw before them a brilliantly lit chamber, its ceiling arching high above them. It was full of small, jewel-bright birds, fluttering and tumbling all around the place. On the other side of the chamber there was a heavy door. Harry cast his eyes around the room looking for the broomsticks that would help them onwards. They had with the help of Professor Snape discovered the way to past Flitwick's enchantments.

Draco, Harry and Neville seized a broomstick each and kicked off into the air, soaring into the midst of the cloud of keys. Arianna stood by the door ready. Not for nothing was Harry the youngest seeker in a century. He had a knack for spotting things other people didn't. After a minute's weaving about he noticed a large silver key that had a bent wing as if it had already been caught. Harry nodded to his friends not taking his eyes off the key, he felt rather than saw Draco diving down from above and Neville rocketed upwards. The key dodged them both and Harry streaked after it and he caught it. Flying low he passed the key to Arianna who caught it and unlocked the door. The moment the lock had clicked open the key took flight again. Fortunately Harry was still seated on his broomstick and caught it again.

Arianna held the door open as Harry and the others passed through. Harry handed her the key and she took Harry's broomstick and headed in the opposite direction. Harry, Draco and Neville continued on. The next chamber lit up suddenly as they stepped through. They were standing on a huge chessboard, behind the black chessmen, which were all taller than they were. Facing them on the other side of the chamber were the white pieces.

Harry nodded and they took their planned positions. Draco was to be a knight, Neville a rook and Harry was a bishop. Their opponent started when a white pawn moved forward two squares. Draco started directing the black pieces with some help from Harry. The two were a formidable team. In the end Draco was forced to sacrifice himself, the white queen hit him hard on the head. Sighing Harry moved the last three squares to win the game. The white king threw his crown at Harry's feet. They had won. The chessmen parted and bowed leaving the door ahead clear. Turning to look at Draco Harry

found Arianna was already there tending to her cousin. Nodding to Neville he moved on, Draco was going to be ok. Arianna was the best healer in the group.

Going up the next passageway they came to another door, pushing the door open Harry had to hold his breath as a disgusting smell filled the air. Running as quickly as they could they ignored the huge troll that was lying cold on the floor. Neville pushed open the next door and they rushed through. As they regained their breaths they noticed a purple flame had come up behind them. The other door leading onwards now sported black flames.

He walked over to the table with the seven differently shaped bottles and seized the roll of parchment lying there. Reading it silently Harry tried to work out which one he would need to continue on. Muttering to himself he walked around the table pointing to each bottle before consulting the parchment again. Finally he grinned and handed Neville the round bottle from the right end of the line. Picking up the smallest bottle Harry drained it in one go. Neville took a huge gulp of his and gave Harry a pat on the back. They left the chamber in opposite directions at the same time. Neville headed back the way they had come whilst Harry went on to face Quirrell.

Chapter 11: The Man with Two Faces

Harry entered the last chamber alone; he smirked lightly as he came face to face with his least favorite professor.

“Good evening Professor Quirrell. Fancy seeing you here.”

“Potter, I wondered if I’d be meeting you here.”

“Well here I am.” Harry smirked again.

“Yes, I believe someone is after an audience with you.”

Harry put up his limited occlumency shields as professor Quirrell turned around and unwrapped his turban. For the first time in over ten years Harry came face to face with his greatest enemy. It was the

most terrible face Harry had ever seen, it was chalk white with glaring red eyes and slits for nostrils. Harry thought it looked rather like a snake.

“Harry Potter...” it whispered.

Harry remained carefully blank as he gave a small nod in greeting.

“Very good! I was most surprised to see you sorted into Slytherin. I feared you would turn into a mere copy of your parents. Would you join me? You could be more powerful than you could imagine.”

Harry appeared to be contemplative whilst behind his mask he contemplated his next move. He knew he had to keep his ability a secret and yet he couldn't accept. Deciding his best option was to be diplomatic Harry shrugged still appearing thoughtful.

“I'll think about it.” Harry said slowly as though the idea was still going through his head.

“Excellent! Perhaps in the meantime you would be so kind as to help me with something.”

“That would depend on the task.” Harry said cautiously.

“Ah, alert. That's good! What I would like you to do is to help this stuttering fool retrieve the Philosopher's stone.”

“What's in it for me?”

“Power, immortality and riches beyond your imagination.”

“Hm...Okay, I'll give it my best shot. What do I do?”

“Just step up to this mirror here.”

Harry stepped forward stopping in front of the mirror that was situated in the centre of the room. It was a magnificent mirror with an ornate

gold frame, standing on two clawed feet. There was an inscription carved around the top: Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi. Harry quickly worked it out, I show not your face but your heart's desire. Harry realized what it was, the Mirror of Erised. Looking carefully into the mirror Harry smirked as he watched himself pull a blood-red stone out of his pocket and wink before replacing. He had the stone, now he just had to think of a story.

"Well, what did you see?"

"I saw myself as the most powerful wizard in England."

Keeping his mind subtly guarded he thought of the day when he would defeat both Voldemort and Dumbledore as he looked Voldemort in the eye with as much Slytherin attitude as he could. Satisfied Voldemort turned back to the mirror and frowned trying to work out how to get the stone out. Harry slowly backed up as he headed for the doorway of flames. Unfortunately it was then that Quirrell and Voldemort had switched positions and Harry found himself looking Voldemort in the eye.

"Well, well, not leaving so soon are we?" Voldemort asked smirking.

Harry quickly raised his wand and cast the first spell he could remember.

"Locomotor Mortis!"

The spell worked to lock Quirrell's legs together causing the professor to fall over unbalanced. Before he could recover however Harry shot another two spells in quick succession making sure they were first-year spells and weren't too powerful.

"Expelliarmus! Petrificus Totalus!"

The two spells worked to first disarm the professor whose wand Harry caught deftly with his left hand as his professor became rigid and lay on the floor unable to move. Harry contemplated his next step. He needed to get out of there as soon as possible. Raising his arm he

tentatively touched the flames. Harry jumped in surprise as he wasn't burned. As he was about to walk through the flames he felt a hand on his shoulder and heard a scream behind him. Without contemplating it further he ran through the flames not feeling a thing.

Halfway through the flames Harry came face to face with Quirrell, instead of drawing his wand again Harry recalled the earlier scream and the absence of his professor's hand. In an instant Harry knew what to do; he reached out and touched the man's chest pushing him back into the chamber with the mirror. Hearing the scream again Harry continued on.

Taking the rest of the potion he had given Neville earlier Harry rushed through the purple flames and held his breath as he ran as fast as he could past the troll, the giant chessmen and reaching the chamber filled with flying keys he grabbed the last remaining broomstick and exited through the trapdoor to where Terry was still playing the Harmonica keeping the dog asleep. They left and found Anthony on the outside. Harry threw his cloak over the three of them. They gathered Blaise, Daphne and Theo who disappeared under Theo's cloak.

Walking as quickly as they could they rushed down to Professor Snape's office where Neville, Draco and Arianna sat waiting for them. Snape looked up from the essays he was marking and drew his wand ready to curse whoever it was that was disturbing him at that hour. When he saw six of his favorite students appear he relaxed and conjured another six chairs before pocketing his wand and gesturing for them to sit.

"Well?"

"I have it sir. Quirrell's either dead or in huge amounts of pain. Here is his wand as well sir."

Harry reached into his robe pocket and pulled out the blood-red stone and a dark wand. He wordlessly handed both to his head of house.

“Well done all of you. Harry stay behind for a moment please. The rest of you to bed now.”

The Ravenclaws took Harry's cloak and left. The Slytherins took the secret passageway that lead to the Slytherin common room.

“I sensed that there was something on your mind.”

“Yes sir, first of all what would happen to the stone?”

“I shall find some means of destroying it, without alerting our enemies of course. Just out of curiosity how did you get it?”

“It was the mirror of erised, I just looked into it and saw myself dropping it into my pocket and there it was somehow. I was about to leave the chamber when he came after me. I just got away....sir, there was something that happened that I don't understand. When my spells wore off Quirrell came after me as I knew he would but...every time he touched me he got burned.”

“I see. Harry your mother chose to die for you and her love leaves you with her protection which is how you survived that night. If there is one thing the dark lord does not understand it is love.”

“I see...”

“By the way, which spells did you use?”

“The leg-locker curse, the disarming charm and the full body bind. I thought it best to keep to first year spells and keep my skills as secret for as long as possible.”

“Very wise, you should have the fourth year spells covered by now, yes?”

“Yes sir, I've started studying the fifth year spells but have refrained from practicing any just yet.”

“A very wise decision you your part. In the meantime though there is much we can do. We shall look into the history of both your opponents. I will also continue your education in occulemency and will help you with your animagus potion but not to next year. I recommend you continue your physical training as you never know when it might be useful. I might try you on non-verbal spells. You are powerful Harry, probably more powerful then Dumbledore himself at this age. Who knows what you could do.”

“I...thank you Professor.” Harry nodded his thanks knowing his head of house was not one for over praising things. Nodding back Professor Snape gestured to the passageway and Harry left.

The next day the gang slept late after their adventure the night before. They didn't show up until lunch where Harry was greeted by Professor Dumbledore who asked if he could have a word afterwards. Harry silently followed Professor Dumbledore as he was led to his office after they were finished. It was a large and beautiful circular room, full of funny little noises. The walls were covered with portraits of old headmasters and headmistresses, all of whom were snoozing gently in their frames. There was also an enormous, claw-footed desk, and, sitting on a shelf behind it, a shabby, tattered wizard's hat – the Sorting Hat. Standing on a golden perch behind the door was a crimson bird the size of a swan, it had a glittering golden tail as long as a peacock's and gleaming golden talons. The Phoenix, as Harry guessed it to be, stared at Harry with its beady black eye.

“Ah, that's Fawkes the phoenix. Now Harry was there anything you wanted to tell me?”

Keeping his mind carefully blank Harry looked the headmaster in the eye as he answered, “No sir.”

Professor Dumbledore narrowed his eyes in suspicion for a second before he smiled and nodded as he dismissed Harry. Harry and his friends spent the next week relaxing, playing soccer and having practice duels. Slytherin won the match against Ravenclaw earning them their second quidditch cup in a row and securing the house cup with a hundred point lead to Gryffindor. Walking into the common

room with Draco and Neville after the match Harry was greeted with a cheer and treated like a god. Laughing Harry shook his head and just spent the night with his friends. The end of year feast was even better as their seventh year of winning the house cup was celebrated. The great hall was decked out in Slytherin colors with a huge banner of the Slytherin serpent on the wall behind the head table. Harry wasn't sure which part of the night he liked the most; Professor Snape coming to tell him that he had successfully destroyed the stone or being invited to both Draco and Neville's Manors.

In all the excitement Harry had almost forgotten that the exam results were still to come, but come they did. Unsurprisingly Harry topped the year with Draco and Arianna a close second and third. Suddenly their wardrobes were empty, their trunks packed and notes were handed out to all students warning them not to use magic over the holidays. Hagrid was there to take them down to the fleet of boats that sailed across the lake, than they were boarding the Hogwarts Express and passes the journey by talking and laughing with the occasional game of chess. As they pulled into platform nine and three-quarters at King's Cross station they packed up their things. Harry and Terry changed into their muggle jackets. Draco, Arianna and Neville left via the floo network as Harry bid the others farewell and left with Terry.

"Harry!"

Harry turned and smiled as he found Aunt Petunia and Dudley running towards him. Waving Harry turned to bid Terry farewell before joining his family.

A/N: Hello! I'm back from my not so pleasant break. I want to thank everyone for their reviews and advice, I have gone back and tried to edit some more detail into the first few chapters so I strongly recommend re-reading it. I also changed a few things as my ideas for second year and beyond changed. I also forgot to mention that there are spoilers for the seventh book...so if you haven't read that what are you doing reading this! Also I realize that my first few chapters do have bits copied word for word from the books and I apologize, I just wanted to familiarize myself to fanfiction writing first but I promise I'm going to break away from the books now although this first chapter would be very similar.

A lot of people have asked me why Harry doesn't like Dumbledore and I can't say because you aren't supposed to know just yet but you will in a couple of chapters or so. Other questions: What did Dumbledore do to make Petunia to dislike him that much? and Just how much trouble will this Harry be to Dumbledore? Hehe, this is a very good observation and really important but like I said before you're not supposed to know just yet! Also, wonder why Dumbledore suddenly suspects Professor Snapes loyaltys now. Tough one to answer, it's got to do with Harry and Neville being sorted into Slytherin (when he expected Gryffindor), Harry's close friendship with Draco and Snape's lack of interference I think. There is another part to it but it would kind of spoil the whole Dumbledore mystery.

Oh yes, I just have another point to make. No Harry isn't prejudiced against Gryffindors because they are Gryffindors. He actually has very specific and legit reasons for disliking every person he dislikes, some of which are in his own house...as you are about to find out.

Happy reading

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Chapter 12: His Best Birthday

Not for the first time, an argument broke out over the breakfast table at number four Privet Drive. It was the day before Harry's twelfth birthday and he was trying to convince his Uncle to let Dudley attend his party that evening. Today it was Neville's birthday and his

grandmother was holding a joint birthday for them at Longbottom Estate. Neville Longbottom was one of Harry's best friends along with Draco Malfoy who would also be attending.

"No way!! I won't have it!! He will be in danger! How can he protect himself from all them?"

"What danger? It's a birthday party! Aside from Mrs. Longbottom the only other adults there will be Professor Snape and Remus."

"Professor Snape? How am I supposed to trust a man I've never met?"

Harry opened his mouth to continue the argument when his Aunt silenced him with a shake of her head. He closed his mouth with a sigh and shrugged handing the argument over.

"Now Vernon dear, I've met Snape before; we grew up together after all. And I know that he is very able but more importantly he is very loyal to Harry."

Finally Uncle Vernon gave up with a sigh, "Very well, but if he is harmed in any way..."

Harry nodded before his uncle could finish the sentence. The rest of the meal passed in silence before Harry excused himself and went upstairs to pack. After the party Harry would be returning to Malfoy manor with Draco and Arianna, Draco's cousin and their close friend, for two weeks before returning to Longbottom Manor until he returned to school.

It had been a great summer so far. Harry and Dudley continued to share the chores before heading out to the local park to train or play. Dudley had retained his position on his new rugby team and thus they spent hours racing each other. They had also visited Potter Manor after Harry spent ages convincing Remus to take them. They spend a week there where again Harry made the most of the Library although this time it was more for researching purposes then studying purposes.

Ever since the incident with the Philosopher's Stone Harry had been researching about his enemies in order to better understand them and thus defeat them. Dudley had brought his homework as well and Harry helped him wherever he could. Harry also continued practicing his dueling skills with Remus. By the time they left Harry was able to cast his first year spells silently and duel Remus to a standstill although this still tired him slightly.

At five that evening Remus arrived to find Harry dressed in his black and white dress robes and Dudley with his muggle tux. Harry checked to make sure he had the key Aunt Petunia had given him.

“Hey boys, you ready to get going?”

Both boys nodded as Remus shrunk Harry's luggage and took out the portkey which was to take them to Longbottom Manor. Dudley looked at the broken coat hanger with a frown. Harry had pocketed his shrunken luggage and was gripping the coat hanger with one hand. Confused as he was Dudley followed suit and laid a finger on the hook.

Remus activated the portkey and they felt the familiar tug before they landed in the Longbottom's receiving chamber. This time Harry balanced Dudley as he staggered. They were greeted by a happy Neville who led them to his personal parlor. They were the first to arrive and Neville and Dudley spend those few minutes getting acquainted.

A bell rang not fifteen minutes later signaling that more guests had arrived. Neville spend the next hour running in and out greeting their friends who arrived in groups of one or two. Dudley was introduced to everyone as they came in. Harry smiled at how well Draco and Dudley got along although he wasn't surprised.

Dinner was served at seven and it was one of the best meals Harry has ever had! A cake was brought out straight afterwards and it was a work of art. It was completely covered in small sugar snitches with various vines and plants weaved throughout. Harry and Neville grinned at one another as their friends started singing happy birthday.

They cut through the cake at the same time. Harry split open one of the larger snitches whilst Neville died the same to a beautiful red rose.

The party returned to Neville's parlor where Harry and Neville opened their presents. From his two best friends Harry got a wizarding camera complete with all the necessary potions. The Ravenclaws presented him with a nice set of books on advanced spells. His other Slytherin friends got him the usual Wizarding candy. Dudley's present was a box of his favorite mars bars. Remus gave him a photo album of his parents. From Professor Snape Harry received a special case for holding potions.

Finally it was time for Remus to escort Dudley home. Harry shrunk his presents and pocketed it all before flooing to Malfoy Manor with Draco and Arianna. Harry has never travelled by floo powder before and found it different to say the least. It was as though he was being sucked down a giant plug hole. He seemed to be spinning very fast when finally he stumbled out and was caught by Draco who had arrived first.

Harry watched enviously as Arianna stepped out of the fireplace gracefully. They all cast their scourfigy charms to clean themselves of the soot before Harry was lead somewhere by his friends. It was a large room with a crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. There were many portraits against the dark purple walls. Over by the large marble fireplace in one of the big armchairs sat a tall, thin woman with beautiful blonde curls. Narcissa Malfoy.

As they walked in she stood gracefully and smiled down at them. Now Harry could see where Draco and Arianna got their natural grace from. Harry returned the smile as Draco made the introductions. Narcissa Malfoy was every bit as charming and intelligent as her son and Harry enjoyed her company greatly. After an hour of light conversation Draco took Harry to see his wing. Draco, of course, had the main bedroom at the end of the hall. Arianna's bedroom was the first on the right and Harry's guestroom was the first on the left.

The next two weeks passed by fairly quickly as Harry learnt his way around the manor. For the most part they kept to Draco's parlor which was very similar to his mother's only with dark green walls instead of

purple. They also spent countless hours on the grounds where they often played quidditch. Draco, riding a new Nimbus 2001, played keeper as Harry and Arianna who both had Nimbus 2000s played chasers. Both boys were also busy urging Arianna to try for the Ravenclaw team.

Harry met Lucius Malfoy on his second night there, it was dinnertime and the three twelve year olds had just come in from a day outside playing football. He remembered it well. As they walked in the older Malfoys stood up and Lucius stepped forward. Harry stepped forward as Draco and Arianna stepped back flanking him slightly. Harry remembered that night very well.

“Ah, Mr Potter! We meet again.”

“Mr Malfoy, it is a pleasure. And thank you for letting me stay for these two weeks.”

“It is no problem at all. I was very eager to meet one of Draco’s best friends.”

“Thank you.”

The three pre-teens took their seats with Harry sitting at Lucius’ right-hand, the meal continued pleasantly with small talk. They retired to the parlor afterwards where the talk turned to more serious matters. Harry knew from his conversations with Remus and Kingsley that Lucius was once a death eater if not still one. However by night’s end Harry had him on a different path. Sure Lucius wouldn’t be declaring his love for muggles anytime soon but Harry could tell he was sincere when the Lord Malfoy declared his allegiance to Harry.

After that night Harry had dinner with Lucius Malfoy another three times and with each time managed to disintergrate the theory that muggle-born witches and wizards were inferior. All too soon Harry was packing his things and saying his goodbyes as he went to the Malfoy’s receiving chamber to floo out. He had received a letter from Neville informing him that his quest room was ready for him. Harry waved one last time before stepping into the fireplace.

“Longbottom Estate!”

This time having experienced the sensation before Harry was able to step out of the fireplace confidently and more importantly balanced. He grinned with triumph as he was greeted by the usual house elf who led him to see Neville.

Chapter 13: At Flourish and Blotts

Harry enjoyed life with the Longbottoms greatly, Mrs. Longbottom was as kind and caring as Aunt Petunia and is always able to find the time to teach them some new trick or spell. It was on Harry's second full day there that they received their Hogwarts letters.

As usual they are to leave from platform nine and three quarters on September first. The booklist however housed some surprises. There were seven books written by the same man, Gildoroy Lockhart. They glanced at each other's booklist before making eye contact with the same confused expression.

“Must be the new Defense Against the Dark Arts professor. A witch maybe, who is a fan.” Harry sneered. He had a low opinion of the man having heard all about him from his friends and having read one of his books. It was obvious the man was a fake, how the rest of the wizarding world couldn't see it was beyond him.

“Actually, it is the idiot himself.”

Harry and Neville both jumped at the voice they knew so well, it belonged to the man who was both their potions professor and their head of house. Professor Snape stood in the doorway with a grim smile as he walked in and dropped into the nearest armchair with a sigh.

“Professor Dumbledore has had some difficulty finding someone new for the post. After what happened to Quirrell most people are afraid to come teach. Lockhart was the only one who even responded.”

“Hello Professor Snape...”

Before Neville could continue a familiar eagle owl flew in from an open window, Harry held out his hand as Meriadoc dropped Draco's letter and flew out again. Opening it Harry read the letter out loud.

Dear Harry and Neville,

How goes things? We've been busy with quidditch and mother making us study. We think we are improving though. Have you guys received your letters yet? Dad's taking us out next Wednesday. Meet up at Flourish and Blotts?

Draco and Arianna

Neville nodded wordlessly and left to ask his grandmother. Harry smiled as he turned towards his professor.

“Sorry about that, It's nice to see you again. How have things been?”

“It would be a whole lot better if that idiot wasn't teaching this year. But never mind that, how are your holidays going?”

“They have been enjoyable so far. I have just returned from two weeks with the Malfoys. I've also been working on my spells. I have progressed to casting my first year spells silently and have almost done same with my second year spells. We have also been practicing our Quidditch as well.”

“Excellent! And your...studies?”

“I have been keeping a detailed analysis of both their histories going back a generation.”

“Very good! Whilst I'm here I shall continue your education on potions and occlumency. We shall also see if you are up for fifth year spells.”

At this point Neville had returned with his grandmother and they were both grinning. A small house elf trailed behind them wearing a tea towel with the Longbottom crest, a rearing yellow tiger on a brown field. In front of him hovered a large tea tray.

“Severus! How wonderful to see you again! We were just about to have tea, please do join us!” Mrs Longbottom was a natural host; she was never caught by surprise.

After tea Mrs Longbottom left to visit an old friend and Professor Snape took them to the Longbottom’s dueling chamber where they spent most of the day dueling or making potions. On Wednesday four alarm clocks went off nice and early. After a quick breakfast in the dining room they stood in front of the fireplace in their traveling cloaks ready to leave.

Arriving at the leaky cauldron they met up with Draco and Arianna. Terry and Anthony joined them at the bank and the other Slytherins waited for them outside Flourish and Blotts. The large group made their way through the store, which was more packed then usual and picked up nine sets of textbooks that were exactly the same. They were about to pay for them when a cheer broke out behind them. Rolling their eyes they ignored it and headed for the counter when they were stopped in their tracks by a short, irritable man who made to grab Harry’s arm.

Reacting on instinct borne of long years mock fighting with Dudley Harry grabbed the man’s arm and twisted it hard enough to make him sweat but not yet hard enough to break his arm. After a minute or so of stunned silence Harry let the man go. Taking a closer look at the man Harry realized he was a photographer if the camera around his neck is any indication. Harry stepped back with a smirk as the man nursed his arm.

“Never touch me like that again!”

With that Harry shook his head, they paid for their books and had almost made it out when a familiar voice stopped them yet again.

“Bet you loved that didn’t you, Potter?”

Harry turned to find himself face to face with Ronald Weasley who was wearing his usual scowl.

“Dark Harry Potter,” Ron continued, “can’t even go into a bookstore without hurting someone.”

“Dark? Who said anything about dark you pathetic weasel.” Draco spat in Ron’s direction. It was only Arianna’s hand on his arm that prevented his progress forward.

“You know Weasley if you weren’t so narrow-minded I might have considered offering you my friendship. As it stands, however, you are in no position to be threatening us.” Harry smirked once again, watching as Ron took in the nine students and their parents. However, Ron was not without support. His three older brothers were there, as was his younger sister and lastly his loyal side-kick Seamus and his parents.

“Hey boys, what are you all doing? It’s crazy in here! Let’s go outside...” Mr Weasley stopped in his tracks at the sight of his greatest nemesis.

“Well, well, well, Arthur Weasley.” Mr Malfoy smirked.

“Lucius!” Mr Weasley nodded coldly.

Suddenly Mr Weasley was blown backwards into a nearby bookshelf. Harry laughed as he picked up a book called ‘Prefects who gained power’. With a deafening roar Mr Weasley threw himself at Mr Malfoy who had his wand out only to be stopped by Mr Nott who tackled Mr Weasley. That signaled the start of an all out fight.

The shop assistant was frantic as he hoped from one fight to the next yelling at them to stop. Draco and Neville had taken on Ron and Seamus whilst Mr Weasley and Mr Nott were still fighting. Mr Malfoy and Mrs Nott battled against the Finnegan’s. Harry, Blaise, Theo and

the Ravenclaws just stood back and watched the others with amusement. Meanwhile Mrs Longbottom had shrunk all their books and left the store still engaged in conversation with Professor Snape. Harry noticed laughter coming behind him and turned to find the young Weasley girl laughing at her brother.

“Hello, I’m Harry and this is Blaise and Theo. That there is Arianna and the two boys over there are Anthony and Terry.”

Harry’s friends nodded their greetings before turning back to the entertainment on hand. The Weasley twins’ focus seems to be on one of the books that had fallen off the nearby shelf rather than on the fight at hand. Nonetheless the Anthony and Terry watched them with a critical eye ready for action should they join the fray.

“Umm...hi.” Harry’s attention came back to the girl in front of him who was blushing darkly as she tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. “I...I’m Ginny.”

“Nice to meet you! Are you starting Hogwarts this year?”

Speechless all Ginny could do was nod; she didn’t trust herself to speak. Before Harry could say another word the others had stood up and were brushing their clothes off. Both sides sported injuries although Harry was proud to say the Gryffindors looked a lot worse.

“We’ll catch up on the train.”

Harry gave Ginny one last smile and led his friends out. As they left Harry could help but wonder why the Weasley twins hadn’t joined in. He sneered slightly as he thought of the older brother, Percy, who had tried to put Harry in detention a whole ten minutes before curfew. The twins however seem to be ok, maybe there is hope for the Weasleys yet, Harry smiled to himself. They soon finished their school shopping and headed their separate ways.

The time came closer for Harry to return to Hogwarts and he couldn’t be more excited. As much as he loved life at the Longbottoms’ he couldn’t wait to get back to Hogwarts and see the rest of his friends.

Harry and Neville had spent their days reading their new books, flying around the backyard, tending Neville's garden or just hanging out. They had a full-blown duel, as full-blown as twelve year-olds can, that resulted in much laughter, trip jinxes were traded for tickling charms as the two had tested their spell knowledge.

The night before they left the house elves cooked up a storm and Mrs Longbottom rounded of the night with some spectacular fireworks. Harry closed the lid of his trunk with a sigh as he shrunk the trunk and went downstairs. After breakfast the two young wizards and one witch stood ready to depart as they waited for Mrs Longbottom to floo first. Once there they were greeted by the Malfoys and Arianna.

Thanking Mrs Longbottom for her kindness and hospitality over the past couple of weeks Harry joined his friends in their search for a compartment. Luckily they were early and they were able to take charge of one of the larger ones in which all their friends could join them. No sooner had the train taken off did they hear a knock on the compartment door. Expecting it to be the others Harry waved for Neville, who was the closest, to open the door as he continued his conversation with Draco and Arianna.

"Eh...Hello."

The unfamiliar voice stopped Draco in mid-sentence as everyone turned to look at who it was. It was the red-head girl Harry had spoken to in Flourish and Blotts standing in the door looking decidedly uncomfortable as she waited for them to either welcome her or reject her.

"Great! Glad to see you could join us! The others are running late but please take a seat. I believe you've met Arianna before. Well, I'd like you to meet my two best friends, Draco and Neville. Guys, this is Ginny. Welcome to your compartment!"

Tentatively Ginny sat down next to Arianna and the pretty Ravenclaw started talking. It wasn't long before Ginny started to open up to them and by the time the others had returned from a visit to the trolley lady she was laughing and joking along with the rest of them. Funnily

enough she was like a miniature Arianna without Ari's grace and elegance and the two took to each other like ducks in water.

They arrived at Hogsmeade station and parted with Ginny who headed off to join Hagrid in the boats. The sorting ceremony went off without a hitch. Harry watched impassively as first-year after first-year was sorted, he clapped politely whenever one was sorted into Slytherin but he barely looked their way. Plenty of time to get to know them later he thought.

Finally, "Weasley, Ginevra!"

Ginny walked proudly up to the stool shocking her brothers who weren't used to seeing their sister so confident. Harry smirked, it was amazing how having friends can change a person. He looked sideways at Neville who was watching with polite interest. It was hard to imagine what he would have been like had Harry not taken him under his wing.

"Bloody hell! Hurry up! I'm starving!"

Harry was jerked out of his thoughts as he turned to the speaker. Harry rolled his eyes at Crabbe who was being his usual annoying self. After two weeks of being followed around by the 'human bludgers' Harry had snapped. Crabbe and Goyle soon found themselves walking through the Hogwarts in Hufflepuff robes. Needless to say, from that day on neither of them bothered Harry ever again. Not that it was a big lose.

"Oh shut up Crabbe! Is that all you ever think of?"

Flashing bright red, Crabbe muttered something unintelligent before turning silent. Harry smirked and shook his head, he was the leader of the second year Slytherins so to speak. They all obeyed him without question, a fact which he uses to his advantage as he dislikes the other four second year Slytherins not a part of his group. Even some if not all of the third years would fall over themselves if Harry asked them to do something. Harry turned back to the front in time to see the food appearing before him.

“Hey! What happened? Where’s Ginny? I saved her a seat.” Harry frowned as he searched up and down the table for his red-headed protégé.

“She’s over there with Ari.” Draco snickered softly pointing to where the two girls were whispering excitedly at the Ravenclaw table.

“Oh! “ Harry nodded and started piling food onto his plate. It wasn’t entirely unexpected after all.

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A/N: Harry starts his second year, so tell me what you think. A couple of twists in here and a couple more to come. The following chapters may be a little shorter but I promise to upload more frequently.

Edit: Some typos. Thanks everyone!

Chapter 14: Gilderoy Lockhart

The next day did not start out so well for Harry. He was woken before five by a troubling dream he couldn't remember and was unable to return to sleep. Finally giving up Harry rose, showered and dressed before leaving the dormitory. Randomly wandering Harry was surprised to come across Arianna and Ginny arguing in the hallway. Fortunately it was still too early for other students to be about. Harry walked over quickly before things got worse.

"Hey ladies, what's the matter?"

The two Ravenclaws jumped at the sound of Harry's voice and blushed. It at least proved that they didn't expect to see anyone at this hour. Arianna hesitated and watched Ginny out of the corner of her eye sighing, "Just a difference of opinion. Girl stuff."

Harry nodded knowing that girl stuff was the signal for something he didn't want to know. He made the mistake of asking Arianna and Daphne what it was last year and was told about things a guy should never know about, especially not an eleven year old who didn't have much contact with females.

"She's going to need guidance, can I count on you? Teach her Occulmency while you're at it." Harry whispered into Arianna's ear. Arianna was somewhat like the female leader in the group although there was only her and Daphne. Receiving a nod from the beautiful Ravenclaw Harry smiled and stood up straight addressing both Ravenclaws. "Alright, let's go to breakfast."

Both Ravenclaws nodded thankfully and followed Harry down to the Great Hall. As they were still early Harry joined the girls at their table. Soon enough the others started trickling in and Harry returned to his own table. Harry had to admit Ginny had potential, she'd be a wonderful addition to their group but not yet. Harry wanted Arianna to watch and guide her for a little while.

Classes started and all was right at Hogwarts. Harry looked at his timetable as Professor Snape came around. They had

Transfiguration first with the Gryffindors no less. They were supposed to be turning beetles into buttons. Harry almost forgot to mutter the incantation as his beetle was the first to become a perfect button earning him twenty points. His friends followed not long after also earning points.

Harry spent the rest of the lesson starting on his homework when an explosion on the other side of the room caught his attention. Seamus sat there covered in thick grey smoke coughing; it seems the Gryffindor hasn't lost his fascination with explosions. Once Professor McGonagall had cleared the smoke Harry noticed the boy's wand had been snapped in half and re-bounded together with spellotype.

Grinning, all the Slytherins gave Neville a pat on the back. During the fight at Diagon Alley Neville had managed to snap the Gryffindor's wand. News of what happened made its way around the school very quickly and Neville had become famous. At least within Slytherin anyway. That day at lunch the entire Slytherin table came around at some point to congratulate him.

Straight after lunch it was time for DADA with the Ravenclaws. As they stepped into the classroom Arianna, Terry and Anthony called out for them to join their table. Whilst they were waiting for Lockhart to show Arianna filled him in on Ginny's progress. It was as Harry had suspected, she was obviously very knowledgeable about the wizarding world and its ways but she had been held back slightly by her parent's narrow-mindedness.

Harry told Arianna to bring Ginny to their next study session. Before they could continue however Professor Lockhart had arrived and introduced himself. Harry actually felt like vomiting right then and there. Looking towards Draco they both smirked at the same time. They were going to have fun this year especially as they had both done researched at their respective manors when they discovered who would be teaching this year.

When he received his 'quiz' Harry just rolled his eyes and took out a book to read. Half an hour later Lockhart collected their papers and Harry handed his over with a grin. He hadn't written a single word other than his name. They only one to have 'passed' the quiz was

an awe-struck Padma Patil who received ten points for answering every question right. Harry fought to contain his laughter as their task for that lesson was revealed. Looking around he saw he wasn't the only one.

Lockhart released the pixies and Harry shook his head cramming his book back into his bag before it could be destroyed. Drawing his wand Harry pointed it at a pixie who was tugging on Arianna's hair. With a muttered incantation Harry froze the creature with a freezing charm Remus had taught him. Another flick of the wand sent the pixie hurtling back into the cage.

His friends followed his example combining the two spells until all the pixies were secured. Daphne locked the cage tight and they started packing up. Suddenly Lockhart appeared from under looking rather disheveled. The group somehow managed to turn the snickers into coughs.

"Well done. Twenty points to Slytherin and Ravenclaw. I could have done it much quicker myself, of course, but I wanted you all to have a chance."

No one believed a word of it. Shaking their heads Harry and his friends turned to leave still hiding smiles and smirks when Lockhart stopped them again. "Harry, a word please."

Harry sighed and leaned against the nearest desk as the others left.

"Harry, Harry! What happened in the bookstore! I've seen it many times before, it's ok to be jealous! After all, I have won Witch Weekly's most charming smile..."

Harry sneered and picking up his bag left without saying a word. After that Harry spent most of his time avoiding the man. Finally the weekend arrived; Harry was planning on playing a five-on-five quidditch game with his friends until Flint approached him Friday night and told him to be on the pitch at eight in the morning.

After breakfast Harry and Draco head out to find the Gryffindors already there. They looked to Flint who was smirking and they smirked too. This shall be good, the thought crossed Harry's mind.

"Flint!" The Gryffindor captain bellowed at Flint. "This is our practice time! We got up specially! You can clear off now!"

Flint barely reacted as he responded calmly, "Plenty of room for all of us, Wood!" Harry recognized the look on Flint's face, it was the one he had when he knew he had already won the argument before it had even started. By now the rest of the Gryffindor team had landed and they faced off.

"But I booked the pitch!" said Wood, positively spitting with rage. "I booked it!"

"Ah," said Flint as he played his trump card, "but I've got a specially signed note here from Professor Snape." He then proceeded to read it out loud. "I, Professor S. Snape, give the Slytherin team permission to practice today on the quidditch pitch, owing to the need to train their new keeper."

"You've got a new keeper?" asked wood who was obviously distracted. "Who?"

Harry stepped aside to let Draco stand between him and Marcus.

"Malfoy?" Seamus stuttered from his position between the Weasley twins.

"Finnigan! What's the matter? Seeing things?" Draco smirked as the rest of the Gryffindor trio came over.

"What's the matter, why aren't you playing?" Ron asked as he reached them. "What are they doing here?"

Harry smirked as he stepped forward and shifted his broomstick catching the attention of the Gryffindors who gasped in shock. "A gift from our keeper's father." At this point they noticed that Harry wasn't

the only one with a new broom and that the entire Slytherin team had one.

“Good aren’t they?” Draco asked smoothly as he too stepped forward. “Too bad it would take a miracle for your parents to even afford one.”

Ron snarled but his brothers held him back. No one watched Seamus though who had drawn his broken wand, “eat slugs!” A loud bang went off and a jet of green light shot out of the wrong end of Seamus’ wand hitting him in the stomach. He flew back several feet and landed on his back.

Hermione shrieked and ran over just as Seamus leaned over and coughed up a nice big juicy slug. With the rest of their team hovering anxiously the trio made their way off the pitch. The Slytherins were doubled over roaring with laughter as they held onto their new brooms for support. Soon enough they regained their composure and practice began.

Chapter 15: Changes and Revelations

October arrived, spreading a damp chill over the grounds and into the castle. Madam Promphrey, the matron, was kept busy by a sudden wave of colds amongst the staff and students. Luckily Harry and his friends have remained healthy thus far. Flint’s onslaught of quidditch matches continued despite the weather. Thus it was one stormy Saturday afternoon that Harry and Draco found themselves drudging into the castle drenched to the skin and covered in mud.

They paused in the entrance hall and had just cleaned themselves and dried their robes when they heard whispering behind them. Fearing that it was filch they both spun around quickly to find the Weasley twins standing there trying unsuccessfully to hide a smoldering salamander behind their backs. They eyed each other warily, the Gryffindors tense, the Slytherins amused. Then Harry decided to put them out of their misery and see if they were made of better stuff than their younger brother.

“What’s that you have there?” Harry asked with a friendly smile.

Two things happened at once. One, Draco looked at him as though he was mad for being friendly with Gryffindors or maybe it was because they were Weasleys. Two, the twins looked shocked to see a Slytherin smiling, not smirking and appearing friendly. Slowly the salamander made its appearance.

“We rescued him from Care of Magical Creatures.” The twin holding the salamander explained.

Harry raised an eyebrow but decided he was better off not knowing. The entire school knew that if a prank was played it was almost an absolute certainty that the Weasley twins were involved. Thus Harry refrained from asking what they were doing with a salamander that may or may not play a part in their next prank. Dragging a speechless Draco Harry headed for the dungeons leaving behind a shocked pair of twins.

“Hey Potter!” a voice called.

Harry turned and looked at them questioningly.

“You’re not going to tell anyone are you?”

Harry considered them for a moment then shook his head and continued walking pulling Draco along behind him who still hadn’t said a word. Once they reached the dungeons however, Draco collected himself and started walking of his own accord.

“What did you do that for?” Apparently Draco wasn’t happy.

“Think about it, I doubt we could have taken them. They aren’t known as the best pranksters since the marauders for nothing. Also now they sort of owe us and you never know when that might be useful.”

Truth was that Harry was hoping to recruit the two red-heads to his group, pranksters they may be and low in the ladder of marks but

they were smart. They reached the common room and joined Neville in front of the fire. Harry sighed as he closed his eyes and relaxed. Between his homework, extra classes with Professor Snape and Quidditch Harry was exhausted. He was just about to fall asleep when a high-pitched scream came from across the room.

Looking up Harry spotted the source of the noise. A first-year stood with his wand out in front of him pointing at a black cobra that was hissing sharply at him. Before Harry could move Flint came forward and cast a strong shield between the boy and the snake. Then he proceeded to yell at the boy. Everyone watched the pair with interest and Harry was the only one to notice when the snake tired of the magical barrier and decided to attack Daphne instead.

“No! Stop!”

And miraculously the snake did stop; it slumped to the floor looking at Harry as though he was fascinating.

“You speak?”

Harry nodded at the snake before looking up to make sure Daphne was ok. The whole common room was looking at him with awe, no one made a sound as Flint silently vanquished the snake. Harry was speechless as he looked at his friends. Daphne was caught between shock and relief. Draco, Neville and Blaise were staring at him with a mixture of awe, reverence and disappointment. Theo on the other hand simply looked amused.

Uncertain Harry fidgeted slightly before he shrugged and headed upstairs gesturing weakly for his friends to follow. Shrugging of his Quidditch robes Harry had just managed to change into his normal clothes before his friends joined him collapsing onto his bed. Draco went to change as they waited for him to return.

Now that Draco was clean and dry and everyone but Daphne was there Harry decided to start without her. Suddenly the door opened to admit Daphne, Arianna and Ginny. Daphne ran over and gave Harry a hug so hard he fought to remain breathing.

“Oh Harry! Thank you! Thank you!”

“Daphne...can’t breathe...”

“Oh sorry!”

Sheepishly Daphne gathered herself and perched on the edge of Neville’s bed as the Ravenclaws took their seats. Harry set up some basic privacy wards before they started.

“Ok, where to start?”

“Why didn’t you tell us?”

Harry looked at Draco who was in shock and shrugged. What was he supposed to say? Sorry, it slipped my mind? Or I forgot about it?

“To be honest it never came up and I sort of forgot about it after a while.”

Harry winced prepared to face whatever his friends threw at him except for this. Draco started laughing so hard he fell off his bed. Not long after Blaise joined him, then Neville. Theo sat there with the same amused expression whilst the girls were giggling madly.

“What?” Harry asked annoyed

Draco recovered first and took a deep breath before replying. “Sorry Harry, but only you could forget something this important.” Shaking his head Harry joined in as they let out their laughter.

When they were all done Harry decided to address how they were to deal with this revelation. Most of them agreed that they should address the rest of the house first before deciding. It also led to the possibility of Harry being a descendent of Slytherin which they were to discuss with Professor Snape.

“Ok, next order of business. The Weasley twins.”

Draco scowled, Ginny sat up straighter and the rest just looked interested.

“I want them watched, they would be a good addition to our group. Blaise, Daphne I want you guys to organize that...” Receiving nods from the group Harry continued. “...Okay, we need a better meeting place. The others will get suspicious if we keep bringing the Ravenclaws up.”

“Well dad has mentioned a place that only the heir of Slytherin can get into.” Draco offered.

“It’s known as the Chamber of Secrets. The only problem is you need to be a Parseltongue to open it.” Arianna added.

“There is sure to be more than one entrance though and maybe one of those is password protected...” Theo was being logical as always until he trailed off and his eyes went unfocused for a short time. “I know where to find it but I don’t think I could open it.”

“Okay, Ari can you and your boys look into it. Ginny you will be helping Blaise and Daphne with your brothers. Everyone else continue your studies.”

Harry took down the wards and the others left.

Chapter 16: The Hideout

The year was off to a great start, not only was Harry the first to perform any spell correctly, he was also answered every question he was asked correctly. Slytherin was already the point leader this early on. Harry looked at Draco over the top of his goblet and sighed. His best friend was practically bouncing in his seat with excitement. Setting down his pumpkin juice Harry reflected on the past few weeks.

The Friday night study sessions have moved to Saturday afternoon as the second years no longer had a break on Friday afternoons. It

was in the library one Saturday afternoon that Harry discovered something amazing.

/Flashback/

They were doing their charms homework on the fire starting charm in the library. Harry having already managed the spell itself both with the incantation and without focused on his essay. Once all the essays had been done the majority of the group worked on lighting their wands silently. Professor Snape had made it a requirement that those attempting to practice their spells silently could at least master Harry's list of fourth year spells first.

This far Anthony, Terry, Daphne and Ginny (of course) were the only ones who had yet to reach that level and so were practicing the summoning charm whilst Harry contemplated trying the spell wandlessly and seeing what happens. Unfortunately both Remus and Professor Snape were being overprotective and have forbid him from practicing anything above fourth year standard, most of which he could already cast silently. And so Harry summoned one of Arianna's candles ignoring her protests.

Putting away his wand Harry focused on the candle trying to picture it light as he muttered the incantation, "Incendio!" When not so much as a spark appeared Harry scowled and tried to relax falling into his meditative state that he had learned whilst studying occulmency. He tried again this time without even thinking of the incantation and jumped with surprise as his whole candle caught fire and melted into a hot pile of wax onto the table.

Flushed with success Harry drew his wand and used a number of spells to get rid of the mess before Madam Pince came along and yelled at him. This success led Harry to research wandless magic and to try some of his other spells to less success. The only other two spells that he managed wandlessly was the levitation charm and the water producing charm.

/End Flashback/

Smiling Harry turned his thoughts to recent quidditch practices, today was their first match of the season and their lineup had changed considerably. Whilst their old beaters were out with an injury Flint brought Crabbe and Goyle onto the team as substitutes. Surprisingly they were quite good, better than the old beaters so Flint decided to keep them. Everyone was surprised at how well Draco played, their last keeper had been fairly lousy but Draco was much better. During practice he never let in more than one or two goals.

Flint was absolutely determined to win this year as they had a really good team and he also didn't want to lose their streak. With Crabbe and Goyle's deadly aim and brutal strength Harry personally thought that Flint had nothing to worry about. The chasers were working well together as they have been for the past three years and Harry was catching the snitch in record time.

Finally Flint called them up and Harry and Draco bid their friends farewell before following Flint to their changing rooms. Listening to Flint's prep talk Harry relaxed and got himself into game mode as he calls it. It was his first match against Finnegan and Harry wasn't all that worried. He had snuck down to watch the Gryffindors play under his invisibility cloak and knew the boy was going to be a pretty easy opponent.

Before he knew it they were in the air and Harry was having fun tricking his opponent into thinking he had seen the snitch when he really hadn't. Although he had already seen the snitch once or twice he was unfortunately blocked by some perfect hits by the Weasley twins. There was a point when the scores were tied, both keepers having pulled some amazing saves, when Harry spotted the snitch. He feinted right and heard Finnegan follow him, as the Gryffindor got closer Harry pulled sharply to the left and managed to come up with the little golden ball whilst Seamus had continued on searching for the snitch. The celebration that night got them told off by a very tired Professor Snape.

The search for a new meeting place continued, Theo had visited the place that where he knew there some sort of a common room. But as many times as he has tried, he wasn't able to get in. This portrait was located on the ground floor amongst many unused classrooms and

pictured the four founders seated together. This portrait wasn't like the others around it. What was most strange about it was the fact that the founders weren't moving.

It wasn't until the day of Halloween Arianna found the answer. As the story goes, before Slytherin left the founders created the room that was sealed off until an heir came along. So it was that night after the feast that Harry and his friends were gathered in front of the portrait. Daphne and Blaise were keeping watch as the twins joined them.

With Ginny's help Harry had easily got them to join his side, they had always liked their father's love of muggles. So convincing them that there was something wrong with the wizarding world as it was wasn't difficult and neither was asking them to join. Now, Harry laid a hand on the portrait and they watched as the founders slowly came to life.

"Ah, young heir! What year is it?"

Harry looked at the man who had spoken, his several times great-grandfather, Godric Gryffindor. "It is 1992 sir."

"Already? Time flies when you're frozen. Oh well moving on, behind this portrait is a room that resembles a common room."

"We created it to promote house unity." One of the witches spoke this time. She reminded Harry very much of McGonagall and he guessed her to be Ravenclaw. "As one of the heirs you will pick the password for your friends."

"However, at least three houses must be represented for the continual use of our room." This time it was Slytherin who spoke.

Harry nodded glad now more than ever that they had recruited the Weasley twins, "I myself am from Slytherin as are many of my friends. Arianna, Ginny, Terry and Anthony are all from Ravenclaw. And the twins are Gryffindors."

"Very good! Now choose password my heir and enter!"

“How about pronglet for now?”

“Pronglet it is! Welcome to your new common room!”

The portrait swung forward as everyone made their way in. Harry gestured for Daphne and Blaise to go in ahead of him. He was about to enter himself when Ravenclaw stopped him.

“There are many hidden secrets in this room of ours. There are four passageways leading off this room from each side wall to many other rooms. We shall not tell you what they are but they will slowly be revealed in time and will help you with your task in the years to come.”

Nodding Harry filed the information away as he joined his friends in their new common room. It was larger than the normal common room and was decorated simply. Against the far wall there was a roaring fire surrounded by twelve black armchairs that all appeared to be marked. The rest of that wall was lined with almost empty bookshelves. The other two walls had two banners aside with each house's crest upon it. And there was still a lot of open space left for spell casting.

“It's perfect!”

Harry dropped into a chair that had both the Slytherin and Gryffindor crests marked on it, which caused him to grin so it was true. Harry had had his suspicions about being the heir of both Slytherin and Gryffindor as he was both a parseltounge and a Potter. Remus had mentioned that the Potter line and the Gryffindor was one and the same. The others too took their seats that had both their crest and their initials on it. Neville took out his quill and parchment as soon as he was seated ready to take notes.

“Okay, where to begin? As you all would have noticed the twins have joined us. Remember that house prejudices are irrelevant here.”

Everyone introduced himself or herself before they continued. "Next...can someone tell me more about wandless magic?" Harry had read almost every book on the subject that he could find in the library and he wasn't any closer to working out his problem.

"Well, only the most powerful of wizards and witches can perform it." Neville started by pointing out the obvious.

"The only person known to have performed wandless magic this century is Dumbledore. Nicholas Flammel is another although he is probably dead by now..." Arianna continued.

"Wait, I've seen Professor Snape perform wandless magic before as well. He summoned a book to him once because he couldn't be bothered walking and he couldn't be bothered drawing his wand either." Draco interrupted.

"There is also a family who can use wandless magic as they use a wand. It's the magical trait of the Lupin line; I'm surprised you didn't know." Anthony added.

"Magical trait?" Harry paused confused, he was unfamiliar with the term. It was times like these that he was annoyed at his muggle upbringing. Remus had tried to teach him everything but there were many things he left out as they seemed so common to him.

Harry's friends were surprised and nervous, they assumed he knew as he seemed to be well versed in the wizarding world and they sometimes forgot that he hadn't had a pureblood upbringing as they did. No one knew where to start or how to explain it.

"Yeah, every magical family line has a particular trait that they specialize in." Fred started first, his Gryffindor courage coming through.

"I'm not sure what the Potter trait is.." George continued as the twins fell into their usual way of speaking.

"Although the Potter line is descended from the Gryffindor line..."

“...and most of them have pyrokenisis abilities.”

Harry's eyes widened as he linked it all together, “Gryffindor, pyrokenisis. Slytherin, hydrokinesis...but that doesn't explain the wingardium leviosa.”

“What are you talking about?” Blaise wasn't quite following his train of thought.

“Okay, I tried to do some wandless magic the other day. You remember, I burned down a whole candle.” When he received eleven nods Harry continued, “Well after that I tried to see what other spells wandlessly. So far I have only been successful with the levitation charm and the water producing charm.”

“That would mean...” Arianna's eyes widened at the implication. “The descendent of three Hogwart founders?”

The others gasped as they finally caught on, if Harry was unable to perform wandless magic in general and was only able to do elemental magic like those relating to three separate founders then...

“So...What are all your traits?” Harry disliked the awkward silence and decided to try and distract them.

“Well we Weasley...Hey! No trying to distract us!” George started.

“Yeah, besides we just discovered that you could possibly be related to three founders. Aren't you the least bit curious?” Fred asked.

“Well yes, but...there isn't much we can do at the moment so I'd like to know what your traits are if you don't mind.”

“Now that's not entirely true. We can get Professor Snape to brew you a bloodline potion or we can do it if there is a potions lab down here somewhere. It shouldn't be too hard.” Draco smirked. He has

been brewing potions since forever and was now brewing potions way beyond O.W.L. level.

"Okay, okay! We shall work on the potion when we find a potions lab. There should be a descent one around here somewhere. Now will you tell me your traits?" Harry smirked , to him it wasn't a big deal. He had always known he was a descendent of Gryffindor and guessed the same about Slytherin. The only surprise was his Ravenclaw tendencies.

"Us Malfoys are able to tell when someone is lying automatically and can force someone to tell the truth. It is kind of acts like veritaseum but without the dazed effect. My mother was a Black and she has an affinity for languages." Draco smirked at Harry's impatience

"He's right, Longbottoms have a long history of empathy. We can sense and control emotions. My grandmother was a Nott I think and has...Oh I forgot!"

"The Rosier Line is known for their retention abilities. It means we can absorb information a lot easier and probably more importantly we have good memories."

"My dad's always been good at seeing forward, divination stuff." Theo added.

"I'm not sure what my dad's trait was...Hell, I'm not even sure who my dad is." Blaise smirked.

"Greengrass...From what I can tell, we have magical instinct. It's sort of like a sixth sense." Daphne shrugged.

"We Goldsteins have the ability to control light." Anthony smiled.

"The Weasley line is known for their strong magical tempers." Ginny smiled sheepishly.

Everyone turned to Terry who shrugged, "I'm not sure what trait my mother has, my dad is a muggle-born wizard so no help there."

Nodding the group talked for a little longer about their magical traits and how they could use it. Harry figured he could inherit a possible ten traits. He should have the Potter's ability whatever it is and the elemental traits of three different founders as well as his ability to speak Parseltounge. He knew his grandmother was once a Black so he probably had skills with languages as well. Harry decided he should brew the bloodline potion as soon as possible to determine what other lines he was descended from. Given his strong magical core Harry guessed he was likely to inherit them all.

The rest of the night was spent getting to know each other. It was Halloween after all so Harry decided that they could use the break. Everyone got along with the infamous twins amazingly well. Finally it started to get late and they decided to call it a night. As it was after curfew Harry pulled out his invisibility cloak and so did Theo. They were about to do their usual moving around the castle in groups routine when the twins stopped them.

Pulling out a piece of parchment they drew their wands and muttered, "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good."

Chapter 17: The Marauders Map

“You’ve got the map!”

The twins looked up at Harry in shock, “How did you know about the map?” Fred asked.

“We’ve had it since first year...” George continued.

“And we haven’t told anyone...”

“Not even our own siblings!”

The others looked from one twin to the next with open mouths obviously confused about what was happening and also unused to the twin’s speaking methods whilst Harry was simply amused.

“Of course I know about it! I’m the marauder’s heir...so to speak. Prongs was my father, Padfoot my god-father and Moony is my guardian.”

Now it was the twin’s jaws that dropped whilst those who know have talked to Remus before smiled with the same amusement as Harry.

“But...we...”

“That is...”

Looking at each other the twins had a silent conversation in the way that only twins could before handing Harry the map.

“We are honored to follow you oh Marauder’s heir...”

“We give you the map which is rightfully yours.”

“You shall forever have our loyalty great one!”

The twins swept identical bows that were so elaborate that everyone present either snickered or giggled. Harry decided to play along nodding regally.

“Very good.”

Checking the map they found Filch prowling the dungeons and that all the prefects and professors have retired. As it was still risky for the Slytherins Harry sent the Ravenclaws and the twins off first. Then the Slytherins split into two groups and made their way back to their own common room under the invisibility cloaks.

The following day the group met up again straight after breakfast as it was a Saturday. They spent the morning exploring the room and the passageways. Harry had taken Draco and Arianna with him to explore the passageway behind the Slytherin banner whilst Anthony, Terry and Theo headed for the Ravenclaw one. Fred, George and Blaise checked out the Gryffindor passageway and Daphne, Ginny and Neville were given the Hufflepuff one.

Approximately half an hour later the entire group was gathered in the main common room to compare notes. Harry gestured for Draco and Arianna to start first.

“The Slytherin passageway split into two separate passageways not far down.” Arianna consulted her notes. “One led to the best potions lab I have ever seen and that’s saying something.”

“The other led to our common room and is also password protected.” Draco added his piece.

“The Ravenclaw passageway was much the same.” Anthony spoke next.

“Only instead of a potions lab there was the hugest, most wondrous library ever!” Terry was awe-struck.

“The Hufflepuff’s second passageway led to a set of greenhouses that are outside somewhere. It is amazing! Fully stocked and caught in a nice stasis bubble.” Neville appeared to be in heaven.

“Ours also have the split...” George started.

“..But our second passageway leads to a dueling chamber.”

“It’s filled with weapons, everything!”

“From swords and staffs to nunchucks.”

Harry nodded considering what it would mean. “Okay, at least we now have a way of getting back to our common rooms without risking being caught by Filch.”

They all made their way into the library which was as amazing as Terry had made it out to be. The room was large, larger than the main library and the bookshelves that lined the wall easily reached the ceiling filled with old books as well as some newer ones. The middle had various little desks set up for them to study which is where they all settled to tackle their weekly homework.

It grew closer to lunchtime and Harry decided that they should eat in the kitchens as eating together in the Great Hall would be asking for trouble. They were about to leave when the door opened to admit none other than Professor Snape who found himself facing eleven wands. Even Harry who had been the one to tell Professor the location and password of their common room that morning before breakfast had his wand out.

“Nice to see you’re still cautious, password protected or not.” Snape smirked his trademark smirk that no one could recreate.

The group returned their wands to their pockets or in Draco and Theo’s case, their holsters. The Weasleys were somewhat more reluctant than the rest even though they’ve been told that Professor Snape was one of them.

“Hello Professor, what brings you to our common room today?” Harry smiled.

“Not much. I just needed to escape the staff room and thought I could see this new place of yours at the same time.”

“That would be great! Only we were about to head to lunch. Want to join us?”

“Well I guess I can sacrifice some time.”

“Great!”

They made their way downstairs to the kitchens with the twins leading the way as the rest of them have not been there before. Once there Fred reached out a finger and tickled the pear causing the whole portrait to swing forward. Harry was shocked as Jade was there to greet him, he had no idea that his house elf was there at Hogwarts.

“Hello Jade. I didn’t realize that you were here or else I would’ve visited you sooner.”

“Not your fault Master Harry. I forgot to tell you.”

“Why are you here? I thought student’s house elves weren’t allowed at Hogwarts.”

“That may be the case with normal students but you, Master Harry, is the heir to two of Hogwart’s founders. You pretty much own the castle. The two other heirs both have elves here as well. See Gildy there is Hufflepuff’s elf and Ravenclaw’s elf is Smokey over there.” Jade pointed out one female house elf, who was washing dishes and another male house elf, who was folding clothes.

“So that means that they are both here as well...” Harry trailed off as he noticed how hungry his friends were. “...oh well, can we get some lunch?”

They sat down at the closest table and the house elves served them lunch. Everyone was laughing as they were able to enjoy their meal in peace and sit together. Jade was in her element making sure they got the best the Hogwarts kitchen had to offer and that was saying something. By meal's end even Draco, Arianna and Professor Snape who have had their fair share of high class banquets agreed that was the best they have ever had.

Back in the common room after lunch Harry and Draco retired to the potions lab to continue on their individual potions. Harry had started the blood line potion with the help of one of Slytherin's journals and Draco was working on getting the animagus potion right. They wanted to find out their forms as soon as possible even if they couldn't transform just yet. The others also went about their own work.

Neville took the greenhouses out of its stable bubble and was pleasantly surprised at the sheer variety of the plants inside. He recruited Terry and Ginny to help him manage the plants and to gathered the plants that were ready to be used in Draco's potions. There weren't many ingredients that they couldn't get out of the greenhouse that Neville was going to work on expanding.

The others were holed up in the library trying to find a way to communicate more efficiently. At the moment they were working on leaving notes in a hidden passageway. But it won't be long before someone discovers it. They were preparing for the war they knew was inevitable although they were trying to hide that from the headmaster.

With the Nott's ability to see the future, Daphne sensing that something's coming and Mr Malfoy and Professor Snape in the 'inner-circle' of the death eaters everyone could tell something was happening, although what it was they couldn't say. Harry could also sense something off in his scar and was sure that meant Voldemort was moving. Given the incident at the end of last year with the Philosopher's Stone it was almost a certainty.

Mr Malfoy had been given instructions in his dreams to pass on a certain diary to a student at Hogwarts. That old diary that had them all very intrigued, there was a pull to it that most of them couldn't fight.

The only two with strong enough mental shields were Mr Malfoy and Professor Snape. The library group was also helping with to research what the diary was and have yet to come up with an answer.

Luckily with Harry as one of the three heirs Hogwarts has agreed to help keep their secrets. Since they took possession of their common room the night before Harry could feel a certain presence with him throughout the day. It didn't take him long to realize that it was the castle talking to him. He was resting whilst his potion was simmering for another ten minutes. And that's when he let his shields dropped slightly to see what it was that was annoying him and was pleasantly surprised to hear a female voice speaking in his mind.

"Well, well. Godric and Salazar's heir you may be but Rowena's blood you have also. I'm Irene, what's your name?"

"I'm Harry Potter...I'm lost how...?"

"Ah, I see they don't teach history anymore."

"Well, Professor Binns has been teaching us about the Medieval Assembly of European Wizards. But what's history got to do with...this?"

"A lot actually. See, in centuries past it was common to integrate elves into the structure of some buildings. Most of those buildings have all been pulled down and re-built since. Hogwarts is the only one in Europe still standing..."

"And you're the elf integrated into Hogwarts?"

"Oh well done! You are a descendent of Rowena after all."

"Are you sure? How did you know?"

"I'm tied to this castle that was created with the magic and blood of your ancestors and Helga. When their blood is within my walls I can tell. As I know you are descendent from three of my friends I also

know the two other heirs are studying with you. And one of your friends is also a descendent of Helga.”

“You know who they are? Can you give me a clue?” Harry checked his potion and added the next ingredient stirring it even as he spoke to Irene.

“Well, I’ll tell you this much. Both are in their rightful house, Helga’s heir is in his fifth year whilst Rowena’s heir is in her first year along with your Weasley friend.”

Harry threw in the next ingredient as he thought about it. If they could find the other two then they would have no problems keeping the headmaster out. There were only three female Ravenclaws in first year, one was Ginny, another was a muggle-born and the last was a girl named Luna Lovegood. That therefore meant that the heir had to be this Luna girl. That would be Ginny and Arianna’s task to watch her and see whether she was worth recruiting. As for the Hufflepuff heir there were five boys, all of them either pure or half-bloods and Harry didn’t really know them so he couldn’t say.

Soon it was dinnertime and it was time for them to put in an appearance in the Great Hall. Harry and Draco left their potions to simmer and they cleaned up before meeting the others in the common room. Together they headed to dinner where they split up outside of the Great Hall to sit at their separate tables. They were keeping up appearances of not being friends with the Weasley twins. The rest of the school already knew that the Ravenclaws and Harry were close but if the twins were to be discovered as friends of theirs. Well, it could turn out bad. Even Ginny pretended not to like Harry and Draco to keep her brother of her back.

Chapter 18: Dueling Club

Unfortunately several weeks later Weasley found out and an intense fight took place down in the dungeons. It was not long before Potions started when Ron walked over to where Harry and his friends were chatting and yelled at them.

“Hey Potter! You turned my sister against me you...”

The angry red-head aimed a punch at Harry only to be stopped by Crabbe and Goyle who shoved the taller but weaker boy backwards causing him to fall over. Typical Weasley to forget that he was a wizard and had a wand Harry thought.

Harry, Draco and Neville snickered and nodded their approval to Crabbe and Goyle. Ever since it was discovered that Harry was a parseltongue the Slytherins were treating him with even more respect that was almost akin to reverence. He now had the entire house to do his bidding not just the first three year levels. And Harry being the Slytherin he was took advantage of it. He had sixth years carrying his books to class, had the third years running around the castle passing messages or doing his errands and he had the fourth years fetching food for him whenever he or one of his friends were hungry.

Promotion in Slytherin was now done at Harry's pleasure. It used to be prefects then seventh year, sixth year and so on to the little first years. And then within those year levels the hierarchy was passed on social standing. Harry being the heir of Slytherin had changed all that. He was of course at the top and he put Draco and then Neville before Flint. There was now a system of five ranks. Harry's other friends were in the top rank as was their prefect Flint.

The majority of the others were either in the third rank or the fourth rank and only those who had pissed Harry off were in the fifth. Crabbe and Goyle were now in second and the other girls in their year level were in fourth about to be pushed to fifth. Even the sixth year prefect had been pushed down to fourth rank because he had unwisely insulted Harry's 'mudblood' mother.

“What do you want now Weasley?” Harry asked in a bored tone. Draco and Neville had immediately taken up flanking positions behind him as Daphne drew the newly discovered map from Harry's book bag and activated it to keep an eye out for professors or prefects.

“You and your little friends have brainwashed my sister and you’re going to pay!”

The other Gryffindors supported Weasley as they tried to stare down the Slytherins. Of course they forgot that Harry and his friends were just that, Slytherins, and they weren’t easily intimidated by glares or staring competitions. Their return glares however had two of the Gryffindor girls squirming.

Wands were drawn and the Gryffindors fired off some pretty weak spells that the Slytherins easily blocked. “Is there a point to this?” Harry was generally a fairly open-minded and accepting person but the Gryffindor Duo was really starting to get on his nerves. Ron in particular had some sort of grudge against Harry. Even as Harry spoke he noticed Granger standing to one side watching curiously.

“I’ve put up with your crap long enough Weasley and it’s time you were taught some manners.” Harry nodded at his friends and they fired off various low-level spells that top of the class second years could easily cast. The other four knew better than to interfere. When they were done Harry and Draco were both chuckling at the state the Gryffindors were in. They had all lost their wand and the majority was in a full body bind. Others were rolling on the floor laughing and Weasley and Finnegan were dancing like there was no tomorrow.

“Harry! Filch!” Daphne whispered urgently.

Quickly cancelling the spells on the Gryffindors Harry led the other Slytherins into the classroom where they took their regular seats. Granger followed not long after taking her seat but looking at their side of the room nervously, obviously not happy to be alone with so many Slytherins. Deciding to ignore her Harry pulled his textbook out and prepared for their lesson.

“Hey mudblood, what’s the matter? Got into an argument with your muggle-loving boyfriend?” Pansy sneered across the room at Hermione causing the lone Gryffindor to flush darkly and curse under her breath. Draco’s eyes widened as he recognized the words in French and was amused.

Harry on the other hand was not and he turned to Pansy, his emerald eyes glowing. Everyone but Pansy and Millicent wisely backed out of the way. It was funny how even though Crabbe and Goyle were considered the dumbest students of their year, even of the school, they still knew what was expected of them. The two girls on the other hand had a lesson coming to them right now.

“If you ever say that word ever again Pansy Parkinson, you will be begging for death when I am through with you.”

Harry hurled the frightened girl off of her chair and gently into the wall, a pain she may be but Professor Snape wouldn't thank him for hurting one of his fellow Slytherins. Whilst Harry was at it he flung some air at Millicent but not enough to throw her off her chair. Sighing Harry sat down again as the rest of their class came walking in sending glares their way. In the five minutes before Professor Snape arrived Harry took out his book and downgraded Pansy to the fifth rank.

News of what happened in that potions class spread around the house and soon the Slytherins were no longer calling the others mudblood or muggle-lover. Still they found ways of taunting the other houses, Gryffindor and Hufflepuff in particular. Several weeks later Harry, Draco and Neville were passing through the Entrance Hall on their way to Transfiguration when a small crowd caught their attention. Curious Harry walked over and leaned over the shoulder of a short third year to read the note posted on the notice board.

“Alright! Dueling Club! Well, I'm all for it.” Neville looked excited as he looked past another second year student to read the note. Smirking Harry agreed, after class they found themselves talking excitedly with the others. It seems as though word has already spread and they all agreed to go together.

Ginny and her brothers will be attending as well but will be going alone and not with them especially after the fight. Things have been quite between the two houses in their year level and Harry preferred it

that way, he didn't want to waste his energy and magic on Weasley and Finnegan when he had so much to learn.

At eight o'clock the entire group walked into the Great Hall together to find the house tables have disappeared along with the head table and a large golden stage had been set up in the middle of the room lit by a thousand floating candles. It seems as though the entire school the entire school was gathered under the velvety ceiling waiting to see who would be instructing them.

Harry already knew, having been informed by Professor Snape, but he didn't tell the others as he didn't want to ruin the surprise. He smirked as he listened to his friends debate the topic. The majority believed Flitwick was sure to lead as he had been a dueling champion in his day. The rest insisted that Professor Snape would be teaching them as Flitwick was starting to get old.

And then Professor Lockhart stepped onto the platform to the group's combined exasperation all save Harry who was still smirking in amusement. This promises to be an interesting evening Harry thought. Lockhart couldn't even teach Defense Against the Dark Arts properly let alone run a dueling club. And he knew that Professor Snape was an amazing dueler and could easily bring down the popular Lockhart.

"Gather around everyone!" Lockhart reached the middle of the platform and was waving his arm around for silence. "Can everyone see me? Can everyone hear me? Good."

Whilst everyone was focused on Lockhart and his long speech Professor Snape had stepped up to the platform with his usual sneer "...Professor Snape has agreed to help me with a little demonstration this evening. Now I don't want you to worry, you will still have your Potions Professor when I am through with him."

Harry, Draco and Blaise all snickered, judging by the grim set of Snape's jaw Harry thought Lockhart would be lucky to make it through the night. After all Professor Snape was a pretty skilled wizard to have made it through the last war and could take down most wizards and witches without even breaking a sweat. Their two

professors took up their positions opposite each other and bowed. Raising their wands into dueling positions Lockhart started the countdown.

“3...2...1...”

Both of them swung their wands over their shoulders but before Lockhart could say a word Snape yelled, “Expelliarmus!” There was a blinding flash of scarlet light and Lockhart was blasted backwards off his feet, off the stage and into the wall. This caused their corner of the room to cheer whilst various fan girls around the room were gasping with worry.

Picking himself to his feet Lockhart made his way slowly and unsteadily back to the platform. His clothes were awry and his wavy hair looking much like Harry’s did in the morning, which is to say very messy. Once he had retrieved his wand from one of the giggly Gryffindors from their year Lockhart tried to play off the whole thing. Harry sneered, doesn’t the man have any honor at all? A duel is a duel and one must lose, but to do so in such a manner is worse than the actual loss.

Professor Snape was looking murderous which Lockhart must have finally noticed for he moved on. The two professors went through the room pairing up students with others in the same year level. Professor reached the Gryffindor Trio first and judging by the cold smile he wore he had plans for them. Harry wondered which one he would be dueling.

“Time to break up the Gryffindor Trio I think. Potter! Let’s see what you make of Mr Weasley here and Mr Finnegan...”

Finnegan moved closer to Granger causing Professor Snape to sneer, “I don’t think so. Mr Malfoy come here, let’s see you pair Finnegan here and Miss Rosier if you could take Granger.”

Professor Snape then proceeded to pair Neville with another Gryffindor, Dean Thomas. And then the rest of the group was paired amongst themselves, Daphne and Ginny, Theo and Anthony, Terry

and Blaise, Fred and George. Finally the professors finished pairing the last few students and made their way back onto the platform.

“Get ready! Facing your partner and bow!” Lockhart called.

Harry bowed slightly smirking all the while whilst Ron simply nodded his head as they raised their wands. “Remember to cast your charms to disarm only! We don’t want any accidents here.” Lockhart yelled at them. Harry smirked, like that was going to happen.

Readying his wand as Professor Lockhart counted to three; Harry tried to remember that he was only allowed to perform second year spells at the most. On the count of three he pointed his wand at Weasley and yelled softly, “Tarantallegra!” Harry laughed as he watched Weasley dance an uncontrolled quickstep. Weasley then tried to point his wand at Harry to cast some sort of spell that Harry dodged without even moving.

Ever since Halloween Harry had been practicing his new found skills and found that controlling the three elements was as easy as breathing. During a practice duel with Draco Harry found that he was able to effortlessly ‘blow’ away his opponent’s spells without having to actively block them.

Quickly disarming his opponent Harry took a moment to see how his friends were fairing. Draco was having a hard time avoiding all the stray spells that were coming out of Finnegan’s broken wand. Harry discreetly set up a weak shield knowing that Draco was able to manage himself. Neville had cast a full body bind on Thomas and was now inspecting his fingernails bored. Arianna had Granger rolling on the floor in laughter and the others had managed to start small duels.

“Finite Incantatem!” Professor Snape shouted; Weasley’s feet stopped dancing, Finnegan lay on the floor having been the victim of his own spells and Granger stopped laughing.

Their group seemed to be among the few who weren’t injured, a Hufflepuff was out with what seemed to have been a punching hex of

sorts. A couple of older students had anything from bleeding noises to cuts and bruises and one sixth year Ravenclaw seemed to be sporting a broken arm. Really, you would think that if they were able to pass their OWLs that they would be able to block a couple of spells. Harry sighed and shook his head glad that that was one of the first things Professor Snape had taught them.

Finally deciding that it might be a good idea to teach them to block spells Lockhart called out for Finnegan and Draco to demonstrate but Professor sneered at the idea. "Mr Finnegan's wand causes devastation with the simplest we will be forced to send Mr Malfoy to the hospital wing in a match box." The Slytherins laughed at this. "How about Potter and Weasley instead?"

"Excellent idea!"

Harry and Weasley climbed the platform taking opposite sides. Harry stood beside Professor Snape deciding what spell he should cast, he couldn't wait until he was able to use his full repertoire. Weasley seemed nervous as he received some last minute instructions from Professor Lockhart. Professor Snape also had some last minute instructions for Harry, "Show them why you belong in Slytherin."

With a nod and a smirk Harry stepped forward raising his wand, "Scared Weasley?" Harry muttered softly.

"Yeah right." Weasley spoke out of the corner of his mouth.

Lockhart began his countdown again and on the word "go" Weasley raised his wand and fired off a leg-locker curse that Harry didn't even bother blocking letting it sail over his head as he moved slightly out of its way. It was a good thing he was so agile thanks to his position as seeker. Almost immediately afterwards Harry raised his wand again and yelled, "Serpensortia!"

The end of his wand exploded, Harry smirked as a long black snake shot out of it and landed heavily on the floor in the middle of the platform. The crowd backed away screaming and Harry could almost hear Draco laughing behind him. Professor Lockhart tried to prove his

bravery by attempting to rid them of the snake but the spell he shot at the wand didn't do much other than aggravating the snake.

Once the smoke cleared from whatever spell it was that Professor Lockhart had cast the snake rose up and moved to attack the closest person, Arianna. Frightened Harry moved forward and shouted, "Not her! Go for the red-head instead but don't bite him." As he spoke all those that weren't previously aware of his heritage looked at him in shock, the Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs in particular were backing away in fear. The Slytherins on the other hand were smirking and some were fighting laughter.

The time has come for their heir and leader to be revealed and they were ready. Harry's smirk deepened as he watched the snake make his way over to Weasley's side of the platform fangs bared as though ready to attack. Professor Snape quickly banished the snake much to the Slytherins disappointment they had been hoping that the snake would bite Weasley first. Harry shrugged and hopped of the platform. Their first dueling club session ended five minutes later with the understanding that there won't be another one. At least not whilst Professor Lockhart is around, Harry smirked as he fell asleep.

Chapter 19: Reading The Future

The response of the student population amused Harry greatly. The Hufflepuffs and Gryffindors all backed away from him in fear whilst the Ravenclaws looked at him as though he was something to study. The Slytherins who already knew were using the revelation to their advantage. The older students would randomly greet Harry as “Lord Slytherin” especially when they were in the middle of fights with the Gryffindors.

About a week after the dueling club incident their seventh year prefect officially “crowned” Harry as the prince of Slytherin and he was given a rather nice crown to wear. This ticked the Gryffindors off even further and their attempts to get even with Harry led to Gryffindor’s lose of nearly one hundred points in the one week. Professor Snape in particular was very vindictive when taking away points, unknown to the rest of the school; Irene was feeding Professor Snape information on where the latest fights were happening. Not even their victory against Hufflepuff on the quidditch pitch could bring them out of last place.

The professor’s reactions were also interesting. Professor Snape, of course, continued to favor Harry as did most of the other professors. Professor McGonagall however was always watching him warily but couldn’t fault his classwork and so continued to give him the points he deserved. The reaction that amused Harry the most was Professor Lockhart’s. The man was now trying to follow Harry around trying to get him to admit that it had been a fluke. Of course whenever he did that he would find himself facing Harry’s loyal snakes and so wisely (for once) retreated.

The study group was having a hard time finding a time to meet as they now had quidditch players from three different houses. Fred and George were of course still beaters in the Gryffindor team. Harry and Draco had practices daily and Arianna and Anthony have joined the Ravenclaw team as chasers. Nonetheless they managed rather well. The majority of the group, Ginny aside, had reached the fourth year spells. Harry had mastered all of his fourth year spells silently and had most of his first-year spells wandlessly. The twins were in the process of casting all their spells silently as were the rest. They were

really progressing much too fast for normal students and Harry was worried that it might cause some problems in the future.

Control of their traits was also going exceedingly well. All of them save the Weasleys were able to fully control their traits and yet their traits weren't supposed to be controlled. They were making good use of their traits, Neville had discovered that he had was an earth elemental which explained why he was so good at Herbology. It also answered Harry's question of which one of his friends was Helga's descendent. Arianna was reading books like mad, her ability allowing her to remember every word.

Those with Black blood in their veins (Harry, Draco and the Weasleys) started learning as many different languages as they could. Harry was learning French, Latin, Italian, Spanish and Welsh at the same time. Draco who had been taught by his mother since he could speak was already fluent in Welsh, French, Latin, Italian and Spanish. He was now in the process of learning, strangely enough, Bulgarian, Portuguese and Irish. The Weasleys were also in the process of learning French, Welsh and Latin although they were by no means fluent.

Blaise was able to speak to various different animals which made him even more confused as to his father's identity as Harry also had the same talent. Harry's abilities were amazing, he had full control of the three elements being able to conjure it, vanish it and move it. He also had some sort of magical charisma that made people follow him and he guessed that to be his Potter trait as his father was also a popular leader.

The last of Harry's traits stumped him, aside from the skills he had inherited from the founders, his father and his grandmother Harry also had limited empathy and magical sense abilities. That meant that he was somehow related to Neville and Daphne. He also had the Dumbledore trait of magical sight which confused him as he knew that the Potter and the Dumbledore blood lines have never crossed, a fact that he was most happy about.

Theo had taken to studying Divination to refine his ability and was easily able to read tea leaves, orbs and even tarot cards. He has

practiced his readings on them and most were fairly standard and have turned out to be true thus far. Harry's reading was somewhat more complicated and confusing. In one teacup Theo saw three things; a grim, an eye and a unicorn horn. According to Theo the grim was the omen of death and that the eye alluded to protection and truth whilst the unicorn horn referred to healing as well as protection.

Everyone was lost as to the meaning of Harry's cup since Theo also did a tarot reading for Harry using his new set of tarot cards Blaise had bought for his birthday as well as looking in to the crystal orb. Again in the orb Theo spotted the grim only it wasn't like it was stalking Harry, Theo said it was like death was a kindred soul. What was even more confusing was Theo's card reading.

The cards talked about Harry losing his parents and his new beginning at Hogwarts, or that's what he saw it as anyways. The cards were also accurate as far as Harry's hopes of becoming accomplished, a good leader and a good person as well as his fears of losing the war and all the things associated with Voldemort's victories.

There were three cards that raised a lot of questions. Firstly the card that showed the best possible outcome hinted that Harry would be receiving a good, kind and loving father. Now whilst it's true that Harry never had a proper father figure it was also true that he looked up to Remus as one and Harry wondered whether there was going to be a change in his guardianship.

Secondly, Harry's immediate challenge seemed to indicate anxiety, doubt, suspicion and dishonesty. Third and lastly, the cards indicated that there was some sort of external force working against him through deception, disgrace and double-dealing. The only ones who were even close to working out what they meant were Harry himself and Theo who was good at puzzles. Not sure with what to do with the information Harry put it to the back of his mind for when the time came, he also kept Draco and Neville close by as he watched for the deception mentioned in his cards.

It was the day before they broke up for Christmas, the entire group was going home and were trying to get some work done before they

leave for two weeks. Harry and Draco were again in the potions lab again working on their respective potions. Harry's bloodline potion was almost finished, he just had to let it cool before mixing his blood and Draco believes he has finally perfected the animagus potion.

Not long ago Arianna had discovered an old infirmary behind a weapons shelf in the dueling chamber. With the Ravenclaw boy's help she was cleaning it out and working on stocking it up. With the number of dueling accidents they had they couldn't go running to Madam Pomfrey all the time without the matron becoming suspicious. Between Draco, Snape and even Harry they should have the cupboards fully stocked by the end of year. They were to stock up on bandages and what-not during the holidays at Diagon Alley.

Neville and Blaise were in the greenhouses perfecting things before their two week absence. The others were either reading in the library or were practicing their spells in the dueling chamber, especially the Weasleys who unlike the others didn't have the luxury of an unplottable manor or estate. Harry had been surprised at how well the Weasleys were doing, even Fred and George could outduel Harry, just.

"Yes!"

Harry was jerked out of his thoughts as Draco yelled triumphantly. He was sitting on the floor an empty vial in his hand. "What's up?"

"I finally got it right! I saw my animagus form...not exactly what I would have liked but it was alright."

"Mind if I have some? What was your form?"

"Oh of course! There should be enough for everyone. My form...I was a ferret..." Draco made a face, obviously he had been hoping for something more powerful.

"Hey, that's not a bad thing. Powerful is not always the best. Excuse me one second." Harry sat on the floor not wanting to fall off his chair when he passed out. Then he quickly downed his potion and passed

out. In his mind Harry could see four different animals in front of him. They moved slightly roaring or screeching before they jumped as one into his body. Moaning Harry came around and shook his head.

"That's impossible."

"What happened? Did you see your form? What's impossible?"

"Um, apparently I have four forms...I didn't know you could have more than one."

"Oh yes, a lot of the more powerful wizards develop a second or third form later in life. But if you have four now..."

"I don't think I'd develop anymore forms later on...unless one of my traits is a shapeshifter."

"Well...there have been some Blacks with an affinity for morphing...like my cousin, she's a metamorphosis."

"Really? A metamorphosis? That's wicked!"

"Yeah, our mothers are sisters. Her name is Nymphadora Tonks"

"Oh, Tonks. I've heard Kinglsey mention her, she's his trainee."

"Aha, so tell me what forms you got? I'm guessing there would be a snake somewhere, a bird maybe and probably a great cat."

"Yeah, not surprising. I got a stag, that's my dad's form as well. A tiger and snake and I also saw a falcon as well."

"A falcon? So you're definitely part Ravenclaw then."

"Well, Irene seems to think so, besides I am an air elemental."

"True."

"Well, I'll find out soon enough."

Harry got up off the floor and checked his potion that looked to be the right color now. Filling a bowl he poked himself in the finger and let three drops of his blood fall into the bowl before healing it. Harry mixed it quickly before drawing a piece of parchment to him. Sighing he dipped the parchment into the bowl, he watched as it started writing his lineage. Lifting it out of the bowl Harry placed it on the bench as he watched the writing appear.

It started with his name, then led to his parents before reaching his grandparents. And that was where the first surprise was. He knew his paternal grandmother was once a black but what he didn't realize was that his maternal grandmother was a Greengrass. He had always been told that his mother was a muggle-born. Looking at his grandfather Harry noticed that he was related to the Longbottoms as well as the Dumbledores.

"Well that was unexpected."

"Um, Harry. Look at the bottom would you?"

Curiosity got the better of him and Harry scrolled down to the bottom to find Gryffindor at the head of the Potter line. No surprise there but...Salazar Slytherin. He thought that his Slytherin heritage was a result of his encounter with Tom Riddle who was a Slytherin heir therefore making Harry the next magical heir rather than the blood heir as the parchment suggests. Tracing the line down slowly Harry found it had passed down on the maternal side from Salazar's daughter all the way to his mother.

"I guess I really am the heir aren't I. I never realized my mother wasn't a muggle-born. That must mean my aunt and cousin are squibs..."

"Harry, you're still missing something..."

Looking at the bottom again Harry again took note of Gryffindor and Slytherin's name before he noticed another alongside it. He was only partially shocked, "Of course...well that's that..." Finding Peter Evans, Harry's grandfather, Harry traced the line back...all the way

to...Rowena Ravenclaw. Shaking his head Harry dropped into his chair and sighed. "Please say there are no more surprises."

"Just the one. You are the last living magical heir of the Evans line."

"Shit! I've got to tell Remus!"

Still slightly in shock Harry helped Draco bottle the rest of the animagus potion into several vials for the others to take, there were some spare that Draco put into storage. They had discovered a rather large storage room under the floor of the library and were now in the process of stocking it up with things like potions, food and even spare clothing or parchment. They then began the cleaning up process. When done they brought ten vials of the animagus potion back to the common room placing one in each pigeon hole before sitting down to do some of their holiday work. Harry noticed with amazement that his seat was now marked with all four of his animagus forms.

Given the discovery of the Library Harry had decided to re-work the bookshelves in the common room into a set of pigeon holes where they could leave each other messages, potions and notes. It drew closer to dinnertime and the others were slowly wondering in taking their potions. One by one they collapsed onto the floor or for the smarter ones their armchairs. In the Great Hall under a discreet privacy charm Harry and the other Slytherins discussed their forms.

Everyone was shocked that Harry had four forms at such a young age. In the end though they weren't surprised with the forms he had been given. The news that he was in fact a pureblood did produce more interesting reactions. The other animagus forms weren't wholly unexpected. Neville was a Cheetah, Blaise a Fox and Theo a Wolf. What was interesting though was Daphne's animagus form of Raven. Harry always thought she would be more of a sparrow or some cute bird, something delicate.

After dinner they gathered in the common room to tell each other their animagus forms. Whilst most of them were too young to try to change without burning up they were still excited about the day that they could fully change. Anthony and Terry's forms of Hawk and Eagle caused everyone to smile; they were the perfect forms for

Ravenclaws. Arianna was also a bird, a nightingale. Ginny's form of a horse was well-suited. As for her older brothers, this one caused everyone to laugh, weasels.

The next day they gave their trunks a once over to make sure they hadn't left anything essential before piling onto the train. As soon as Harry stepped onto the train Harry felt another presence in his mind that didn't belong to Irene or Voldemort. Curious Harry tried to talk to it but it just giggled and showed Harry the way to a certain compartment in the back of the train.

Following Harry his confused friends were trying their best to keep up. Upon reaching what appeared to be the back of the train Harry stopped and pressed a palm to the wall whereby a door opened allowing Harry and the others to enter a compartment that was twice the size of the largest compartment in the main part of the train.

The compartment was decorated with banners of both Gryffindor and Slytherin and Harry presumed that it was the heirs' compartment. The others filed in and found that they all fit in there comfortably. Settling down to their usual tasks it was an hour in before the peace of the compartment was interrupted.

They were all surprised when Theo drew their attention to the Ravenclaw banner that had appeared on the wall behind him moments before their compartment door opened. A startled Luna walked in to see twelve wands pointed at her. Before a word could be uttered from either side another girl walked in.

“Granger!”

Harry rested a hand on Draco's shoulder to stop him. Even though Draco had come a long way from believing that all muggles should die he still wasn't very comfortable with associating with them. Harry knew that Granger could be an asset. Unknown to the others Harry had had several first and third years following and monitoring the Gryffindor. He had noticed that she was a bit of a loner in Gryffindor at the moment and so he watched.

The reports he got were very pleasing. This girl although still a little bossy and prejudiced was well-raised and her research skills were amazing. As far as being a witch was concerned she couldn't match Arianna or Daphne but she wasn't a pushover either. With the right training and guidance she would shine just as Ginny did.

The wands went away as Harry gestured for the two girls to sit down. "Luna, Hermione. What can we do for you?"

"Well Arianna told me that you were planning something and I wanted to talk to you."

With Draco's truthsaying skills and Neville's empathy they could easily tell whether or not the two girls were a threat or allies. They had already guaranteed that everyone in the group was loyal to Harry as was Draco's parents, Professor Snape and Remus. Although Harry never doubted the latter two, his father had obviously trusted Remus enough to give him control of the Potter Estate and after all Harry was an empath, if limited.

Slowly Harry let Luna and Hermione in on their secrets, telling them all about their special common room, his suspicions of Luna being another heir, their push for equality in the wizarding world. By the time the train pulled into Kings Cross Luna and Hermione had agreed to join them with Draco and Neville confirming their sincerity and Luna had agreed to attend Mrs Longbottom's party in two weeks time. Unfortunately they were unable to invite Hermione who was a muggle-born.

It was frustrating the way the wizarding world was arranged; even Remus didn't merit an invitation on account of his werewolf heritage. Now if it had been a normal party neither Neville nor his grandmother would have hesitated to invite either of them but elite society was brutal and could force the Longbottoms out of their group for even suggesting such a thing. The Weasleys were barely able to scrape through on account of their mother being a Prewett.

Harry watched as most of his friends left via floo with promises to meet up at Longbottom Manor in two weeks time. Hermione departed through the barrier to the muggle world whilst Harry waited for Remus

to show up. The Weasleys were also waiting for their parents to show up. Remus had decided it was time for Harry to learn of his future responsibilities and was to take him to meet his account manager at Gringotts.

Smiling nervously as Harry watched the twin's parents make their way over Harry hoped Remus would come soon. He really didn't want to call Jade, he couldn't do much wandless magic just yet and he didn't want to risk showing his elemental powers. Harry knew that they were prejudiced against Slytherins and that Ron had probably told them many stories about him.

Harry was surprised to see another person with them; Mr and Mrs Weasley were there as was Ron and the prefect Percy. But the other one was a good-looking young man, sporting long red hair tied back in a ponytail and a single fang earring. Harry realized who it was thinking that the twins were right, Bill seemed cool. The Weasleys have finally reached Harry, Ginny and the twins and after hugging his younger siblings Bill held out a hand which Harry shook politely.

"You must be Harry! Bill Weasley at your service. Ginny and the twins have told me so much about you. It's nice to finally meet you."

Harry grinned as he responded, "Nice to finally meet you too." Harry turned to Mr and Mrs Weasley and prepared himself. "Mr Weasley, Mrs Weasley. How do you do?" Harry gave a slight polite bow that he had stolen off Draco. As an afterthought he nodded to the last two, "Ron, Percy."

Mr Weasley, although shocked, returned the bow with a nod of his head and a smile. "Harry, it's good to see you. I'm very well and yourself?"

"I'm good and even better now that it's the holidays." Harry smiled relaxing slightly. Although, maybe it was too early to let his guard down.

Mrs Weasley was about to talk down to Harry when the twins stepped forward and stopped her in her tracks. "Don't say a word!"

“Yes, he is a Slytherin.”

“But he is our friend.”

“And he’s a good person.”

Mrs Weasley stopped in her tracks looking between her sons in surprise. She'd never seen the twins this serious about anything; they also seemed a lot more mature. And here they were referring to the twelve year old in front of her as though he were their king, their leader. Hovering, uncertain as to what she should do Mrs Weasley was rendered speechless. It was at this stage that Remus appeared much to Harry's relief.

"Hey Harry! Sorry I'm late, got held up with some of the managers. Ah, Arthur, Molly! Long time no see."

"Hey, it's ok. Remus, meet Ginny, Fred and George and I'm not sure if you know Bill."

"No I haven't had the pleasure. Nice to meet all of you." Remus nodded politely.

Ginny dipped a perfect curtsy whilst the twins tried to imitate Harry's earlier bow and Bill simply nodded with a smile. "Pleasure!" "Nice to meet you too."

"Harry, we've got to go. Or else we're going to be late."

"Right, it was nice seeing you Mr, Mrs Weasley. Fred, George, Ginny I'll see you in two weeks. Bill, it was nice to meet you. I hope to see you again one day."

"That shouldn't be too difficult. I've transferred to the Diagon Alley branch of Diagon Alley so I should be around more."

Harry nodded and the group said their farewells, Mrs Weasley still speechless as she tried to come to terms with the changes she had seen in three of her youngest children. Going their separate ways

Harry and Remus took a muggle cab to the Leaky Cauldron. Remus shrunk Harry's luggage before they made their way through to Gringotts. Remus led them to a teller near the end and asked for Griphook who was Harry's account manager.

Harry had passed on the news of his lineage to Remus who, although shocked at first, was now going about reclaiming the Evans family fortune which turned out to be quite substantial. Harry gained another four properties, a couple of hotels as well as some more wizarding stocks and the amount of money going into his trust vault has increased. Harry, through Remus, now controlled three seats on the wizengamot.

To say he was the most politically powerful person at the moment was a major understatement. Whilst he wasn't the only one to hold more than one seat (Mr Malfoy held the Rosier seat as well as his own and Mrs Zabini had seven!) Harry also had his status as the "Boy-who-lived" to fall back on and the fact that he is the heir of two Hogwarts founders and a descendent of a third.

Before they left for Evans Estate Harry and Remus visited the Potter family vault where Harry retrieved a couple of journals that had once been his mother's. Harry's mind was reeling from the exact figures Griphook had given him, sure Remus had briefed him on his wealth before but having the real numbers on official Gringott papers was another story.

So he didn't really realize they had reached the Leaky Cauldron and Harry was jerked out of his thoughts as they reached the fireplace. Remus took a bag of floo powder out of his pocket and handed it to him. Remus flooed out first calling "Evans Estate!" and was followed by Harry not long after. Harry stepped out of the fireplace and looked around taking in the room. It wasn't all that different from his parlor at Potter Manor except instead of the red and gold influence this parlor was colored with various shades of blue. Dropping into a random seat Harry gestured for Remus to join him.

Harry and Remus discussed wards for over half an hour before they agreed on what to do. Remus was to cast the Fidelus Charm before they left and Harry was going to ask Bill to set up the other wards.

The Ravenclaw boys had discovered a way for them to communicate over great distances without anyone noticing. Terry had unlocked the spell that let them communicate telepathically as long as they were touching it.

Their communication devices looked like galleons and felt like galleons to anyone else but to them it would feel different. Each person had their own with a small mark like their animagus form in the centre. The library group had spent three weeks working on it. It also helped them to identify each other, fool-proof against polyjuice potions as no one knew of them. Not even Professor Snape and Remus. Harry was the only one strong enough to cast the spell at the moment.

Now Harry used it to contact the twins so that he could ask Bill Weasley, a curse-breaker, if he could help him set up the other wards. With the twins acting as an intermediary Harry set up a meeting Bill for a week's time to discuss it. According to Remus a couple of the hotels needed to have their wards checked so Harry thought he'd ask Bill to do that along with his home at Privet Drive.

Potter Manor was okay as his great grandfather, Wilfred Potter was so distrustful of others he had put the entire grounds under a variation of the Fidelus Charm. The secret keeper is tied into the Potter Blood. There was a book that Harry and Remus called the book of access. In it Harry could control who was allowed access and when he died all those without Potter blood would lose access.

"It's about as safe as I can make it until Bill comes to add to it. If you wanted it to be any safer I'd get the house elves' help."

"Yes, I'll ask one of the house elves to see to it. Does Evans Estate have any house elves?"

"There used to be five of them I believe." Remus consulted a note in his ever present notebook. "They are all at Hogwarts now waiting for you to call them back."

"Right, Evans house elves!" Harry called to the room at random and was shocked when not five but seven house elves showed up.

"Master Harry! We have been waiting for your call. I am Blinky." The oldest bowed and proceeded to introduce the other house elves. It seems that of them have given birth since the last Evans (Harry's great-grandfather) was Lord. Nodding Harry explained what he needed and they all disappeared except Blinky who shifted nervously.

"It's ok Blinky you can speak."

"I...Master Harry, although you have claimed lordship through Mr Lupin your guardian, Mistress Petunia is entitled to an elf."

Harry paused as he thought about it. It made sense; he looked at Remus with an eye raised. "It's your call Harry. He's right but you also have the right to refuse."

Biting his lip Harry nodded, "Very well, but not just yet. When I return home I will explain it to my aunt first before I summon you."

"Very good Master Harry."

With that the old house elf bowed and left with a pop leaving the two wizards behind. Remus resized Harry's luggage for him before flooing out as he headed for dinner back at his own home. Harry nodded to himself and activated his portkey stopping via Potter Manor before heading home. Remus had given him a necklace that was once his father's, it doubled as a permanent portkey. It lets him travel to Potter Manor and back from any location.

He landed in his room and pushed his trunk into position at the end of his bed before going downstairs to see his family. Aunt Petunia had just finished cooking dinner and Harry hurried to set the table. Uncle Vernon arrived not long after and they sat down to eat, as much as Harry wanted to tell them what has been happening Harry knew better then to test Uncle Vernon's patience. Once dinner was done Uncle Vernon retired to his study to finish some paperwork and Harry started talking with Aunt Petunia as he helped Dudley clear up.

"Did you know that your parents were from magical families?" Harry asked casually.

To say that Aunt Petunia was shocked was an understatement. She dropped the plate she was carrying and only quick thinking on Harry's part saved the floor from being covered in gravy. With a flick of his hand Harry guided the air around the plate to set it gently on the bench. Leaving the dishes to Dudley Harry fixed a cup of tea for his aunt and took a seat opposite her trying to calm her down as best he could. His empathy skills weren't strong enough for him to easily project emotions, essentially all he could get from it was a read of other's emotions.

"Thank you Harry. No I didn't know. How did you find out?"

"There is a potion that is able to determine your ancestors. See I was always curious as to how I could do so much magic." As if to demonstrate Harry conjured two balls of water and sort of juggled them for a bit before dumping it down the sink. "That is but a small bit of the magic I can do. I'm not your average wizard. I have the blood of three founders running through my veins. Something about that combination made me more powerful than any other wizard since Merlin himself."

Aunt Petunia nodded, "Yes, I could always tell you were powerful. I could see it. But how can my parents be magical? Surely we would have noticed."

"That's it! That's your proof. Only Evans and Dumbledores are able to see magic with the naked eye. As for your parents they were both squibs as are you and Dudley. It means you are part of a magical family but can't perform magic."

"Really? Um...ok, anything else I should know?"

Harry smiled at how overwhelmed his aunt was and there was so much had left to reveal. "Heaps but are you sure you are up for it?"

"Yes, yes I'll manage."

"Okay well I will be training to become an animagus like my father...but I have four forms."

"Four forms? Is that possible?"

"Apparently, I will be able to change into a stag, a tiger, a falcon and a snake."

"How long do you think it will take? I remember your mother and father talking about it. He didn't fully transform until he was almost sixteen."

"Professor Snape said that I should be able to fully transform by the end of the school year. It's just another fact that tells me I can never be normal."

"Okay, so what else was there?"

"Well as the last magical heir of the Evans line I have inherited the estate. Now most of it is pretty unimportant but! The house elves there are just as much mine as yours and one of them asked if he could serve you here. I've talked to my friend's older brother and he will be coming in a week to ward this place so the choice is yours."

"Well...it would be nice not to have to do the garden or clean up...but I don't think I could give up cooking."

"I'm sure Blinky will be willing to compromise on that."

"Okay done! I would very like to meet this...Blinky."

"Great! What you think Dudley?"

Dudley withheld a grimace as he nodded. He was too distracted with the sink, it was blocked. Harry smirked as he called Blinky. "Master Harry! Mistress Petunia? And Master Dudley?"

"Yes, Aunt Petunia has agreed to take a house elf but there are a few conditions so I suggest you talk about it whilst I help Dudley with the sink."

Harry walked over and placed his hands on the tap closing his eyes. Reaching out with his senses he found something stuck inside the pipe. Sighing he vanquished the water in that side of the sink before lifting the thing that covered the pipe. Focusing Harry pushed whatever it was up and out of the pipe onto the sink. Levitating the bundle of rotting food over to the bin Harry ignited it before examining the broken cover of the pipe. Harry asked Blinky to repair it as his wandless magic was limited to first-year spells. Once he and Dudley were done Harry headed up to unpack and then sleep.

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A/N: Yes I know the trace is on the person and not the wand but in my story the Ministry can only track wands!

Chapter 20: Plans and Confrontations

The next week or two passed in blissful happiness. With Mikky (the Evans house elf) working there Harry and Dudley were free from doing chores and spent their days hanging out in the park relaxing, talking, playing soccer, studying (very little). Michael Thomas and Peter Jones were also around these holidays having chosen to stay behind at their school last year. Peter had been Harry's second best friend after Dudley when they were in primary school and the three of them along with Michael who was another good friend the four of them were much like the marauders. Now Dudley no longer hanged out with Piers and considered Michael his best friend.

Harry and Peter spent some time catching up and Harry had to be careful when talking about his school, "Hogwarts College". He maintained that it was a special boarding school up in Scotland that only allowed entry to children of former students. The funny thing was that not long after Peter told Harry that his younger sister was also at a school called Hogwarts that was also located in Scotland. Harry raised an eyebrow at this; it was too much of a coincidence.

Peter took him to meet his sister, Sophia Jones and Harry could tell she was a witch straight away. He even recognized her as the third first-year Ravenclaw that was sharing a dorm room with Ginny and Luna. They talked about the magical world some more and Harry answered the girl's questions wherever he could, which were a lot, the girl was definitely a Ravenclaw.

When they were alone Harry even showed Dudley more of his elemental magic and was surprised when Dudley was able to perform air elemental magic. Harry frowned as he looked at Dudley, yes there was magic there. Not as much as the average witch or wizard but he wasn't fully squib either, he was borderline probably having just missed Hogwarts. And so Harry started training Dudley in his elemental magic that seemed to extend to controlling water but Dudley wasn't able to conjure it as Harry was able to. Aunt Petunia now had more time on her hands and had taken a volunteer job at the local hospital as well as a part-time job at the local supermarket.

They celebrated Christmas together; it was just the four of them and Mikky this year. Harry was glad that Mikky had joined them as Aunt Petunia really could do with the break. Remus was locked up in Potter Manor that year as the night of the full moon fell on Christmas Eve. Harry really couldn't wait until he could transform fully so that he could accompany his friend to make those nights more comfortable.

Harry got a good haul of presents from new books and new clothes to a broomstick care case and of course the usual sweets. Remus even dropped by the day before Christmas to pass on a wand holster that Harry could wear strapped to his forearm. Mikky cooked up a storm and Harry and Dursley spent the next couple of days working it off.

Bill had come to examine the wards (thankfully when Uncle Vernon was working) with a goblin friend. It was as Harry suspected, there were no wards to speak of except for a minor blood ward that had nothing to do with his mother's sacrifice or his aunt's blood and some basic wards Remus had managed to add. Harry was furious and was barely keeping his temper down as Bill cast the standard household wards. By the time the curse breaker and goblin were done Harry asked them to put up the best wards he could short of the Fidelus and making the place unplotable. Harry watched as the magic flowed around his new sort of friend and the little goblin. When they were done Harry could see the wards on the house and feel them.

Smiling Harry thanked them both, saying that he would make sure Remus paid them by the end of the day. Bill waved it off not all that concerned, he could tell that Harry was an honorable wizard and knew that Remus Lupin was as well. Even if that were not the case Bill would have gladly done this job for free. He was surprised at how much he was paid for his job at Evan Estate and figured that after this and the two hotel commissions Bill could easily retire off that money for the rest of his life.

There was only one thing to mar their perfect week and that was an unexpected call from Remus.

"Harry! I need your help! Meet me at Potter Manor as soon as you can!"

Frowning Harry set the mirror down and ran upstairs grapping his wand and invisibility cloak (just in case) before activating his portkey. Harry looked around warily as he spotted his friend seating in front of the fire with piles of parchments spread out around him. Harry walked over and picked one up, his eyes widened as he realized what the emergency was.

"Holy crap! How did this happen?"

"Language Harry!"

"Sorry, but..." Harry gestured at the parchment in his hand before dropping weakly to the floor.

"Umbridge!" Remus spat the name and Harry raised an eyebrow, "She works for Fudge and has some very...strong ideas about 'half-breeds' as she calls us."

Harry frowned and the fire ignited, he struggled to contain his anger knowing that he would just make things worse if any of the parchments caught. Harry was able to control his magic (just) but he was still fuming. This Umbridge lady was pushing for a law that prevented 'half-breeds' from holding any jobs in the wizarding world and from having a seat in the wizengamont.

"I think it's time to teach this Umbridge what happens when someone messes with my regent." Harry grinned evilly a plan already forming in the back of his mind. He wasn't the heir of the murarders for no reason.

"If it were just this it would be easy enough to deal with but..." Remus handed Harry another sheet wincing as he prepared for the oncoming explosion.

Luckily it didn't come although it was close. Harry's eyes glowed for a moment and the sheet he was holding burst in flames making Remus thankful that he had thought to make a copy. Once Harry could control his emotions he started pacing as he considered their next step. Sighing Harry took his shoe off and retrieved the coin, he was never without it.

"Guys, meet me at Evans Estate in half-an-hour. Neville bring your grandmother. Draco bring your parents. Fred, George bring your brother."

"You got it Harry!"

"No problems Harry!"

Harry turned to Remus, his silent conversation having gone unnoticed. "It's time Dumbledore learns not to mess with me. Can you get Kingsley and Professor Snape to meet at Evans Estate in half-an-hour? I need to go get some things from my room." Once Remus nodded Harry returned to privet drive still furious.

He couldn't believe how sly the headmaster was, going to such a low like this. Harry paced his room for ten minutes trying to calm down before he changed into wizarding robes. He took his case of emergency potions strapping it to his belt. He tucked his invisibility cloak into an inside pocket and ran through a quick explanation of the situation with his aunt who was equally angry before he left via floo.

Still early Harry continued his pacing as he tried to think of the bet way out. It had to be subtle, he didn't want to overthrow Dumbledore yet. He and his friends weren't ready if Voldermort was to return and from what Mr Malfoy could gather that could be anytime soon. There was also Theo's reading that Harry was trying to figure out; could this be the trial to which it referred? His friends arrived and took their seats silently knowing better then to try and talk to him when he was in this mood.

When the last person arrived (Professor Snape) Harry sighed and gestured for Remus to explain the situation as he looked around the room. Harry was glad that they still had until the summer before things were finalized. The only members of Harry's...inner circle or whatever you want to call it, were Luna and Hermione who didn't have their coins just yet.

When Remus was done the entire room was furious, even Mr Malfoy who until six months ago was vehemently against anything non-

pureblood and Professor Snape, who until recently held a major grudge against Remus. But it wasn't the news of the proposed law that had everyone upset, they had enough prominent pureblood families on their side to have the law overturned. No, it was what Dumbledore was trying to do that had everyone in an uproar. Harry dropped into a seat and started a discussion on how to best tackle this problem.

"I say, charge him and have done with it." Ginny's temper was as strong as the others; her eyes flashed red which along with her fiery red hair made her look frighteningly like a demon.

"Aye, that could work. But even though Dumbledore crossed the line we need him where he is." Theo grimaced clearly not liking the situation.

"I was thinking..."

Slowly the planning went on, twelve students, one lord, one lady, one auror, one potions master, one curse-breaker, one werewolf and one social-queen all contributing their ideas/advice. It was getting close to dinner time when they finally came to an agreement on what to do. Everyone left with their own tasks heading home for dinner. Harry's task was going to be one of the hardest but he thought he could pull it off. On his return Harry changed into his muggle clothes; it wouldn't do to turn up to dinner in wizarding robes, and headed down in time to join his family for dinner.

Throughout the meal Aunt Petunia and Dudley were looking at him questioningly. Harry was too distracted in his thoughts to notice though. Finally Uncle Vernon left the table and Harry and Dudley returned from clearing the table. Aunt Petunia set down three cups of tea as the Evans elf, Mikky, started on the dishes.

"Okay Harry, tell us. What is going to happen?" Aunt Petunia looked nervous.

Harry then spent an hour explaining the situation in detail as well as their planned solution. Far from reassuring his aunt Harry seemed to have made her more nervous.

"But Harry what if it doesn't work? Then you would have to..."

"Trust me Aunt Petunia. This will work. But, worse comes, we still have a lot of time to refine our backup plan. It isn't perfect but..."

New Year was wonderful as ever only this year they went into muggle London with Michael and Peter to witness the fireworks. On the second Harry got ready to spend the day in Diagon Alley with his friends whilst Dudley left to hang out with Michael. Arriving a little early Harry found that his best friends were already there, Draco and Neville. Arianna was there as well and judging by her expression the boys were talking about quidditch, it was the only thing that all three could be so excited about. Harry joined them ordering a butterbeer as they waited for the others discussing a surprise they had planned for the day.

Once the last person had arrived Harry led his friends out into the alley. They stopped frequently picking up parchment, ink, quills and potion ingredients that Neville couldn't grow in his greenhouse. Arianna even stopped to pick up the bandages and whatnot that she needed for their infirmary. Their last stop for the day was Madam Malkin's Robes.

Everyone was getting fitted for new robes whilst the Weasleys browsed through the used robes. As the last person was finished being measured, Terry, Harry took the robes the three red-heads had chosen out of their hands and put it back on the rack. Arianna then proceeded to drag a protesting Ginny to be fitted and Draco and Neville did the same with the twins.

They went to get some ice-cream whilst they waited for their robes to be completed. Not long after the robes were done and they paid for them before leaving. The Weasleys were still arguing the purchase of their robes that Harry, Neville and Draco had paid for over their protests.

"This is your debut into society! We can't let you turn up in those shabby robes that you had picked."

At last they gave up and settled for thanking the three Slytherins profusely. The group stopped at the Leak Cauldron for one last butterbeer before splitting up and heading home. Harry decided to see if he could floo home and was pleasantly surprised when he was able to step out of the fire at Privet Drive. He made a mental note to remind his uncle to not get that new electric fire he was thinking of buying.

The next day Harry was about to sit down to breakfast when he felt his 'galleon' heat up. Retrieving it from his pocket Harry focused. "Hey, Harry here what's up?"

"Harry! It's Ginny! We can't go to Neville's party! Mum saw the robes and she flipped! She wants to return them but we told her we can't because it was tailored..."

"Whoa! Relax Gin! I'll take care of it! I'll see you soon!"

Harry closed the connection and thought about what he was going to do. He ran to his room and found a certain hand-held mirror and called out to it, "Remus Lupin!"

"Hey Harry! What's up?"

"Oh not much there's just some things I wanted to ask you about. Meet me at Potter Manor?"

"Sure, I was just about to eat breakfast. Say in half an hour?"

"Perfect! I've got to finish breakfast myself."

"See you soon!"

Harry closed the connection and pulled on his Hogwart's robes, strapped his wand holster on and head downstairs to finish his breakfast. They ate in silence and when he was finished Harry put his dishes in the sink before addressing Aunt Petunia.

“Aunt Petunia. I have some things to take care of so I won't be back until supper if not after. Sorry Duds, but we'll continue with the training tomorrow.”

They both nodded and Harry smiled before he activated his portkey and landed in his parlor. Harry called Blinky and informed him that both he and Remus would be visiting for lunch and that he could possibly have another three people over for lunch. Jade popped in to inform him that Remus was waiting for him down in the other parlor.

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A/N: Next chapter Harry enters the lion's den. And an upcoming confrontation with Dumbledore. I haven't decided where I'll be putting it in yet but it's coming.

Chapter 21: So it begins

“Remus! I’m glad to see that you got through the full moon alright.”

“Of course! Thank you for letting me use your dungeons. It’s a lot more comfortable than the Shrieking Shack.”

“My pleasure! Hopefully I will be able to accompany you soon. Nonetheless, to business. You mentioned that Potter Manor had its own floo network. How does that work with other people?”

“Well it’s fairly easy, as long as you are touching the fireplace people would be able to access the network.”

“That makes sense! Do you want to join me for lunch? I was thinking of exploring Evans Estate.”

“I’d be delighted. Although I will have to bring in some extra protection, some parts of the properties may have some lingering enchantments on them.”

Saying their farewells Harry activated his portkey once again only this time he was standing in front of the strangest house Harry had ever seen. It was lopsided and looked as though it was kept standing by magic. Harry grimaced, now he understood why the Weasleys were so touchy on the money issue. It looked like they barely had enough to survive on.

“Harry!”

Ginny came running from the back of the house holding a very old broom and an old quaffle, Harry smiled and gave the girl a hug unaware that they were being watched from the kitchen window.

“Hey Ginny! How was your Christmas?”

“Oh it was great! Charlie came down for the week and everything! How was yours?”

“Wonderful! Remus was locked up but we had fun anyway. Where are your brothers?”

“They’re out back, we were in the middle of a quidditch game but Ron missed the Quaffle so I had to go get it. Come on!”

“Are you sure? If Ron’s there...”

“Don’t worry, Bill and Charlie are both there as well so they’ll keep him in line.”

“Let’s go then.”

Harry smiled although he was worried about heading into the lion’s den, so to speak.

“Harry!”

“By Merlin! We thought you weren’t coming!”

“You might want to hide”

“Because mum is ready to murder”

“And we don’t want to have to kill her “

“To defend you.”

“She is still”

“Our mother”

“After all.”

Harry smirked, he loved listening to the twins speak in their special way, it just showed how close they were. “Relax guys, I’ll talk to her.” Ignoring the two Weasleys who didn’t like him and were already scowling at how nice their siblings were Harry turned to the oldest two.

Harry nodded a greeting to Bill before turning to the last red-head that he had not met, "Hello, you must be Charlie, the dragon-keeper right?"

Charlie was a little shorter than his older brother and somewhat broader with lots of muscles that came from dealing with dragons. He had a good-natured face that was as freckled as the rest of his siblings and when they shook hands Harry could feel calluses and blisters on his fingers.

"Potter?" At Harry's nod he continued, "Well it's nice to meet you Harry. I've heard many good things about you."

"Thanks, it's nice to meet you too."

Harry doubted that everything that was said about him at the burrows was good, particularly not with Ron around. Even Percy didn't like him very much although he had no idea why, he had never done anything to the perfect Weasley...other than maybe charming his cutlery to hit him on the head at random intervals at random meals.

"Come on Harry. You have to talk mum into letting us go to the party." Ginny was excited with the prospect of going to an elite party and being able to show up in decent robes for a change.

"Okay, okay. I'll see you guys around then I suppose."

Harry followed his three friends inside the house and Harry was surprised at how cramped the kitchen was but he refrained from commenting. Mrs Weasley was there patching up what looked like one of Ginny's dresses. Mr Weasley was seated at the dining table with a spread of paperwork around him. Both looked up when the four students entered the room.

"Good morning Mr and Mrs Weasley. I hope you'll forgive me for coming unannounced but I was told that Ginny and the twins weren't able to attend the party on Wednesday. And I was hoping I could change your minds before I pass on the bad news to Mrs Longbottom." Harry summoned his Gryffindor courage that was

hidden somewhere inside of him. The twins looked at him out of the corner of their eyes surprised; they hadn't heard him speak so formally before. Ginny was a little more prepared as she had been taking lessons from Arianna.

"Mr Potter, it's a pleasure to see you again." Mr Weasley at least seemed genuinely happy to see him which was a start but Mrs Weasley was nowhere near as happy.

"How can you be so nice to him Arthur? You heard what Ron said and what he did to Percy." Mrs Weasley shrieked causing all those present to wince in pain.

"That's it though. What about the rest of them? Ginny, Fred, George and even Bill have only good things to say about the boy..."

The two of them argued for a while seemingly forgetting that said boy was still present. When Mrs Weasley had deflated somewhat and Mr Weasley was winning the argument Harry decided to interrupt.

"Sorry Mrs Weasley. I just wanted to say that I am sorry about the prank I played on Percy, it was childish and...well, I'm not quite sure what I was thinking at the time. As for Ron...it's no secret we don't get along. We just clash too much; we are complete opposites in opinions and attitudes. But that's life right? You can't get along with everyone no matter how hard you try."

Mr Weasley smiled and nodded his agreement as Mrs Weasley was once again shocked at the maturity of the twelve year old. Harry smirked inwardly; never underestimate a Potter he thought.

"I think that it would be a good idea for them to go personally. If they already have the robes it would be silly of us to pass up an opportunity like this." Mr Weasley said with a smile knowing that this was a chance for his kids to make a better life. He had always hated the fact that his name was holding not only himself back but his kids as well.

Harry nodded his agreement, the wizarding world's social hierarchy was something he disliked and this was just step one in his process of breaking down the barriers between rich and poor. He was surprised Mrs Weasley was so reluctant about this given that she had once been a member of elite society having been born a Prewett.

“Oh very well. But please Mr Potter, if you could refrain from buying them any more clothing of that expense. It is unfair towards my other children.” Mrs Weasley finally agreed.

“Understandable and I’m sorry for not having thought of it sooner. Think of it as a Christmas present if that would make the others happy. I will even take back the books I brought them if it makes you more comfortable.”

“Yes, treating it as a Christmas present would placate Percy if not Ron. Thank you very much for doing this Mr Potter.”

“Not at all! It was my pleasure and please call me Harry. There was just one more thing, I was wondering if the twins and maybe Ginny as well could come over to my place and have lunch.”

“If the boys wish to join you for lunch that is fine but I really don’t want Ginny to be at your place without a chaperone. You know how gossips go.”

“Oh of course! Well Remus would be joining us if that counts...or I could call the Malfoys and see if Arianna and Draco are available.”

“If Remus is there that’s fine. Return them before dinner please.”

“No problem!”

They made their way over to the fireplace and Harry sent the three Weasleys through to Evans Estate before flooing himself.

"What?" Fred asked looking around in awe.

"Where are we?" George continued as he fell into the closest armchair.

"This is Evans Estate, I'll explain more later but for now let's go eat lunch." Harry responded after having checked with one of his house elves to make sure that lunch was ready.

They made their way to the dining room and found Remus, Kingsley and some pink-haired witch waiting for them. Suddenly there were five wands out. Harry and the witch glared at each other suspiciously and the Weasleys each had their wand trained on one of the adults.

"Remus, who is she? Why'd you let her in?" Harry asked suspiciously for although he was secret-keeper Remus was also able to grant access to those he chooses as Harry was still underage.

"We're not going back you hear!" Ginny was a little anxious thinking that the adults were there to take her and her brothers back to the Burrow.

"This is Nymphadora Tonks. She's Kingsley's fledgling." Remus responded to Harry's question easily. They had agreed nearly a year ago when Harry decided to take his own side in the coming war to try and recruit as many wizards and witches as they could. And Aurors were on the top of their list, Kingsley has been trying to get as many aurors as possible to side with them.

"We're not here to take you anywhere." Kingsley said calmly holding both hands out to show that he was unarmed although Harry knew he could draw his wand in a split-second if needed.

"But please call me Tonks." The pink-haired witch made a face at being referred to by her first name.

"Can we trust her?" Harry asked the key question, if she was Kingsley's fledgling then yes she would be fairly useful. And with Kingsley training her she is bound to become one of the best in future years.

"Yes Harry, we can." Kingsley nodded completely aware of how important this one question and answer was.

Snapping his wand away Harry held out a hand, "Nice to meet you Miss Tonks"

"Just Tonks and it's nice to meet you too...I'm lost! Shouldn't he be at his aunts? And the Weasley kids..." Tonks frowned, obviously Kingsley and Remus hadn't thought to tell her much before dragging her there.

"Relax fledgling! All will be explained, but first thing's first, lunch!" Kingsley grinned as he rubbed his hands together and looked at the feast the house elves had laid before them.

They sat down at their seats and Harry began the introductions. "Okay, Ginny, Fred, George I want you to meet Remus John Lupin, Potter Regent, werewolf and the last free marauder. Also known as Moony."

"Mr Lupin!" Fred stood and gave his elaborate bow.

"It is an honor!" George followed causing Ginny and Harry to snicker.

"We can't tell you how much this means to us."

"We have looked forward to this meeting for a long time."

"Okay guys, let him eat. This here is Kingsley Shacklebolt, Senior Auror level two and his fledgling Auror in training, Nymphadora Tonks." Harry gestured at the other two trying to redirect the twin's attention away from Remus who was having a hard time holding his laughter in.

"Pleasure!" Kingsley nodded as he heaped a huge pile of potatoes onto his plate, Kingsley had a huge appetite constantly. It came with his job, always running around casting powerful spells, it took a lot out of him.

"Same here." Ginny smiled as she too started piling food onto her plate but in smaller proportions. The twins were still watching Remus awe-struck and didn't reply.

After the introductions were made the meal passed in silence. Once done they all retired to the parlor. Slowly Harry explained everything to Tonks who agreed to join them straight away. He also filled the Weasleys in on everything they have missed out on so far which wasn't much.

They went for a round of the outside of the estate and were pleasantly surprised at the place. Although the castle itself was rather small the lands around it were amazing. The castle was bordered by a forest every bit as large as the forbidden forest only nowhere near as dark. It was a good thing that Remus had asked Tonks and Kingsley to come as they were attacked by a Welsh Green. They had been shuffling through the beginning of the forest when they came across the nesting place of the mother dragon. It took all three of the grown wizards to keep it from attacking until Harry could talk to it.

There was an old barn as well as some paddocks where the fences weren't as strong as they probably once were. They also found two other buildings; a large storage building that was mostly likely for storing harvested food and the last seemed to be another stable. Only this one was a little strange as the roof was charmed to allow things out but not in. Harry figured that Evans Estate used to be home to a very large and productive magical farm if the size of the storage house was any indication.

Unfortunately not long after Remus got called away by one of the hotels to do something and Harry decided it was best not to test Mrs Weasley's patience. So the Weasleys said goodbye to Remus the twins bowing again and again and swearing eternal fealty. Remus walked outside to apparate and Kingsley and Tonks escorted Harry and the three Weasleys back to the Burrow.

Mrs Weasley was panicking as she watched a clock on the kitchen wall. Harry stepped out of the fireplace looking at the thing intently, it wasn't a normal clock. Instead of two hands there was one for every

Weasley and instead of numbers there were locations. Grinning Harry watched Ginny's move from lost to travelling and then to home.

There was a loud shriek as Mrs Weasley saw Ginny and she ran over giving her youngest a big bone-crushing hug. When the twins stepped out of the fire they were given the same treatment. Mrs Weasley now turned to Harry who stood with Kingsley and Tonks with her hands on her hips.

"Perhaps you could explain how my kids were lost, Harry." She was obviously angry having spat out his name a little forcefully.

Swallowing Harry sighed, "I took them to one of my estates. It's protected by the Fidelus Charm so your clock wouldn't be able to track it. I'm sorry I caused you worry. I swear that at no point throughout this afternoon were they in any danger." Except for when they met Aly Harry added silently.

"He is right Molly, we were there the whole time." Kingsley rested a hand on Harry's shoulder as he reassured Mrs Weasley.

The older Weasleys had come in at this point to see what was happening. "Tonks!"

"Charlie!"

Harry looked between the two and remembered that they had graduated at the same time; therefore they would have known each other right? His suspicion was confirmed as they moved towards each other and started talking about what they had been doing after Hogwarts.

Shrugging Harry said his goodbyes to his friends and thanked Mrs Weasley for letting them come over. He was about to floo out when he noticed out of the corner of his eye Tonks and the looks she was giving a certain curse-breaker. Smirking to himself he waved at everyone one last time before he found himself landing in the living room back home.

When he walked into the kitchen Harry found a panicking Aunt Petunia waiting for him although Harry couldn't think why, he was still early. "Oh Harry! Dumbledore was here looking for you! I told him you had gone to the park and then he tried force his way in. I'm glad your friend came by..."

Harry swore lightly (not in English), thanked his aunt and ran upstairs where he proceeded to change into his muggle sporting clothes. After picking up his newest soccer ball Harry used his portkey to return to Potter Manor before appearing in the woods surrounding the park. He then came out slowly walking over to where Dudley was stretching hoping he could play along.

"Hey D, got it."

"Hey Harry! Find the ball alright then? Sorry I kicked so hard."

"Hey, nah it's cool. Anyway it's my fault for trying to play goal keeper. I've never been good at the position."

Harry breathed a sigh of relief as they made their way back to the house. As Harry was about to step inside a man grabbed him on the arm. Cursing himself for letting his guard down Harry twisted the man's arm behind his back.

"Headmaster! I have him...or rather he has me..." The unknown man called.

"Who are you? You better answer before I break your arm."

By now a small crowd was building over the doorstep of number four privet drive. Dudley stood beside Harry flexing his muscles ready for action. Uncle Vernon had just returned from work and was holding his folio threateningly as though he was going to whack someone with it. Aunt Petunia had returned from the kitchen, a large cleaver in one hand. Even Mikky stood there her hand raised ready for action.

The man was now starting to sweat as Harry kept a tight grip on his arm also preventing him from reaching for his wand. Dumbledore had also arrived wearing his horrible robes even in a muggle

neighborhood, his wand held in one hand and some sort of watch in the other. Kingsley and Tonks were also there, their wands held loosely in their hands grinning at Harry.

"My name...Fletcher...Mundungus Fletcher. Headmaster...told me...guard...lost you..."

Releasing the man with a scowl Harry pushed the man away from him sending him flying. "If I were you Fletcher I'd stay away. I might not be so nice next time. As for you headmaster, try and force entrance into my home again and there will be consequences. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some homework that needs completing."

No-one said a word as they were all seated Harry finally spoke. "I was hoping for another year or two but it's clear that things are starting to heat up."

"What do you mean Harry?"

"Okay, it's a long story but the short version is that before I was born there was this dark lord. And he is obsessed with killing anything non-pureblood, this obsession turned into a war that didn't end until the night I came here. This same wizard came to our house and killed my father after a short duel before he tried to kill me. Unfortunately, my mother jumped in front of the curse and he killed her instead. So here I am because my mum sacrificed herself for me and he was killed. But now he wants to come back and is bent on killing me for revenge."

"How is that possible?"

"It's complicated D. A lot of old magic, old dark magic I should say. The point is that it means danger for you. Given his past I know he's not going to care two cents about killing you to get to me. Tomorrow I'm going to ask Remus to prepare you emergency portkeys that will take you to Potter Manor. And I'll be asking the house elves over to improve the wards, after that nothing is going to be able to hurt you inside these walls." They nodded glad that they had some protection even if they didn't understand it. It was like Harry was speaking another language. Old magic? Dark magic?

That night Harry called Parry so that he's head house elf could allocate the appropriate number of house elves to add to the protections at Privet Drive.

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A/N: For all those who didn't notice, Aly is the dragon's name. Completely unimportant right now but I might use her again later.

Chapter 22: Party

It was the day before they returned to Hogwarts for another term, the day of Mrs Longbottom's famous annual soiree and Harry had finally managed to tame his hair. Donning his new dress robes Harry made sure his wand was strapped on tight before he said his goodbyes and activated his portkey. Landing in his parlor Harry then proceeded to floo out. It was much easier not to mention much safer to floo from Potter Manor then from Privet Drive.

It wasn't long after Harry stepped out of the fire that he found himself accosted by the three nervous Weasleys. After calming them down Harry turned just in time to see the Malfoys step out of the fire. After a few words Harry took them to greet their hostess.

"Ah! Mr Potter! Glad to see you as always! And Lucius, Narcissa! It is a pleasure, Mr Malfoy, Miss Rosier..." Mrs Longbottom paused as she spotted the three Weasleys. "...And who have we here?"

"These are our friends Fred, George and Ginny Weasley."

"Nice to meet you! Well Neville's waiting for you in his parlor. I'll see you at dinner!"

They left as an old couple moved in. Mr and Mrs Malfoy moved on when they spotted the Notts (who they were trying to recruit as well) and the kids made their way through the growing crowd until they reached Neville's parlor.

"Harry, Draco, Ari, Ginny, Fred, George!" Neville made his way over to greet them from a chess game he had been playing with Theo. The other Ravenclaws were already there but Daphne and Blaise were both late.

As the last two members of the group joined them the party passed pretty quickly and not all that different from last year. Ginny was a natural on the social scene having taken lessons from Arianna over the last few months. The twins also did well as they echoed Harry and Draco's formal mannerisms; they had even managed to land themselves a double date with Blaise's cousins, the Costa twins.

Harry had implemented part one of their plan and spent a great deal of time going around the main hall with Neville and Draco talking to various members of the wizengamont trying to get them on his side. So far he had Mrs Zabini convinced as Blaise had already begun talking to her about it. Her brother also agreed with him but unfortunately Mr Costa didn't have a seat on the wizengamont belonging to the Italian court.

It was a good thing Harry had started learning his languages as it helped him to win more support. There were others that Harry had convinced and he felt sure that they had enough of a majority to overthrow the law. With Neville by his side and the Weasleys there with him those on the light side were falling over themselves to offer their support to the boy-who-lived. The dark side also rushed to offer their support as Draco's father used his influence as Voldermort's old right hand to convince them.

All told the night was a success. The rest of the kids even ventured into the main hall for a while to take part in the dancing. That caused much laughter as it seemed as though the only ones who could actually dance were Draco and Arianna. Nonetheless they continued valiantly anyway and managed to get through their last dance without stepping on each other's toes.

Breaking up early the group went home to prepare for their journey back to Hogwarts. Harry returned to Privet drive to find he had a letter waiting for him. It was from Remus informing him that he'll be at waiting for him at ten the following morning at Potter Manor to take them to Kings Cross. Too tired to reply Harry changed and fell into his bed. The next day Harry was abruptly jerked to full awareness by Hedwig's cries. Noticing a man trying to make off with his owl Harry jumped up, his wand in his hand before he realized it was Remus.

"What is going on?" Harry asked cautiously.

He knew that there was a chance it wasn't the real Remus. Potions being one of his best subjects he was familiar with the Polyjuice Potion even if he had never brewed it before. Remus looked at him and Harry could see that his eyes had glazed over. Great! Harry

thought, the imperius curse. Grabbing the closest book Harry could find he brought it down on Remus's head, hard.

Watching his friend crumble to the floor Harry sighed as he got ready, packing up his last few belongings and getting dressed pausing only long enough to tell his aunt he was off. Harry gathered his trunk, Remus and Hedwig before activating his portkey. Landing in his parlor Harry withdrew his wand.

"Enervate!" Harry pointed his wand at Remus watching as he slowly woke.

"What happened?" Remus held a hand to his head still groggy.

"I'm not sure, you came to Privet Drive and tried to get away with Hedwig."

"Oh!" Remus sat up as the memories came back to him. "I remember! Dumbledore came to my place and told me I had to separate you from your friends, he said they were a bad influence and that he wanted me to force you to become friends with the twin's younger brother. I told him no, of course, told him it's your choice and that that boy didn't seem like a good sort. After that...I'm not sure. It's a blur."

"Well I can only assume he had hit you with the imperious curse. Sorry but I knocked you out."

"Well that explains the headache. What time is it?"

"Early, want to join me for breakfast? Oh and here." Harry handed Remus a vial and watched as his guardian and friend downed it in one go without even asking what it is. It still shocked Harry how much his friends and followers trusted him.

"Wow, that's much better. One of Severus'?"

"Draco's actually. It's part of our emergency stock."

"Amazing! Is there anything he can't brew?"

"I don't think he's tried the wolfsbane potion yet and his Veritaserum isn't quite perfect."

"You mean to say that a twelve year old..."

"Thirteen actually." Harry smirked.

"Right, that a thirteen year old student is attempting potions most NEWT students can't even brew!"

"Apparently." Harry said amused. He never really thought about the fact that they were working on things far beyond their level. With so many of them working together it made things easier and faster. It almost seemed natural to be where they are. "So breakfast? You know you can't afford to skip any meals. You have been eating properly right?"

"Yes, Parry's been feeding me." Remus replied with a smile. Harry reminded him very much of his parents at that moment. At Hogwarts James was always after Remus to eat properly even going so far as to sneak into the kitchens specifically to get him food (of course, sneaking into the kitchens weren't a big thing for them). After they graduated and James and Lily were married it was Lily who took over, he was invited to dinner every night and Lily would often threaten him with various curses if she found he wasn't eating.

It was amazing how Harry had inherited both of his parent's personalities. Over the last year or so Harry has continued to surprise him with how mature he was for his age, just like his mother. He was the first twelve year-old Remus knew who had twelve students his age or older that looked to him as their leader and had several adults who have all sworn to follow him. Much like James, Remus thought with a grin. Remus was proud yet unsurprised of Harry's leadership skills; he is a Potter after all.

After breakfast they prepared to leave, they floored directly to Platform nine and three quarters. The platform was still deserted as they were somewhat early. Stowing his luggage away Harry and Remus chatted for a while as they waited for the others to show. Slowly the other families arrived and it quickly turned into another one of the

Longbottom parties. When the train's whistle sounded Harry and his friends bid their parents or guardians farewell and piled into the heirs' compartment.

Settling into another term Harry and Draco were caught by Flint almost immediately after entering the Slytherin Common Room and told that practices were to start immediately. Groaning Harry sighed and unpacked, it was going to be a long term. A week in and Harry held their first meeting of the term. It was so much easier to work around the headmaster as with Luna's help those portraits who had refused to bow down to Harry bowed down to her. There were only a couple up in the North Tower and the Hospital wing that still refused to answer to any but the Hufflepuff heir.

Their two newest members were settling in rather well, both have taken their animagus potions and were given coins that were keyed into their forms. Luna was a hare and Hermione was an otter. Luna who was already friends with the Ravenclaws soon became good friends with the rest of them and was happier then she has ever been since before her mother passed away. Hermione was a little more reluctant in the beginning not quite sure of what to make of the large group of pure-blood traditionalists. It didn't take long for her to relax though and she became really good friends with the girls, Ginny in particular.

Their animagus lessons started almost straight away. Professor Snape, a snake animagus himself, was hesitant to teach the group as a whole particularly Ginny, Luna and Hermione. He figured the only ones with a real shot of transforming completely were Harry, Draco, the twins and maybe even Neville. But nonetheless he decided that he could try and they had weekly lessons.

Time passed and Professor Snape was surprised at how quickly his charges learned to change. After two, three weeks Fred and George were the furthest along with Harry not far behind. Of course Harry was learning to morph into four forms at once. But by the time February came around Harry was able to hold each form for no more than two minutes. The twins were able to hold it a little longer reaching two minutes and a half. The majority of the group barely

managed to fully morph and Luna, Ginny and Hermione still hadn't fully transformed by that stage.

Interestingly enough Harry found that with the control of each form his senses enhanced. His eyes were as sharp as his falcon form, also thanks to his other forms Harry found that he moved faster and easier. Add that to his increased stamina Harry improved dramatically during quidditch practice surprising everyone as he once managed to catch the snitch at least twenty times in the one hour practice. Harry also had better hearing but couldn't be sure which form he got that from.

Neville had also acquired the agility and speed of his animagus form which lead to his placement as the reserve chaser. Anthony and Terry's eyes were also as sharp as their forms and Anthony in particular was now much quicker on his broom making it hard for Draco during the Slytherin-Ravenclaw match. So far Fred, George, Arianna, Daphne and Draco haven't experienced any changes to their senses.

Chapter 23: Pranks and More

The New Year had also brought with it a renewed prank war between the new Gryffindor Trio (Ron, Seamus and Dean) and the Slytherin Trio. What most of the school didn't realize was that not only was Hermione helping the Slytherins but so were the twins and Ginny. Ron and Seamus were particularly annoyed this term having witnessed the three Weasleys leave for the elite party over the summer. They were also annoyed that Hermione was no longer speaking to them or anyone else in their year level and was hanging out with the Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs.

Although the war started out simple things quickly came to a head on Valentine's Day. In its way it was an enjoyable time but it was also a day that Harry hated. Lockhart had decided to take over the school, pink hearts could be found floating the corridors and everyone was avoiding the Great Hall as much as possible with Lockhart's decorations. The worst part though was the trolls that were wandering the halls delivering people's valentines. Avoid them as they did Harry was finally caught on the way to quidditch practice, luckily there weren't that many people around as most were still eating dinner.

Once the troll had finished singing Harry scowled and whacked said troll with his broom before gathering his robes and leaving the castle with Draco. "I want to find out who that poem came from." Harry was furious and was barely keeping his emotions in check as he wondered what idiotic fangirl had sent him that horrible message.

"Blaise and Daphne are probably already on it." Draco nodded none too happy himself.

Everyone had their job, it was like organized crime. Harry was the leader, obviously. Draco and Neville were like his Generals or his Lieutenants. Draco also brewed the potions for the entire group. Neville looked after the greenhouse, duh, and was the group's secretary. Arianna was training to become a healer as was Ginny. Daphne and Blaise dealt with information, especially rumors. Theo, as the best chess player, was the group's planner or strategist. His divination abilities were especially useful in this. Hermione has taken on the role of researcher as she was even better at it than the

Ravenclaws. Anthony, Terry, Luna and the twins don't have an exact job just yet.

Harry smiled, warmed at the thought of having so many good friends behind him. After a tiring two hours of quidditch Harry and Draco returned to the Slytheirn common room and dropped into their couch in front of the fire. Not two seconds later Daphne and Blaise dropped down beside them.

"We have discovered where the 'valentine' came from" Daphne held up her fingers as she said the word valentine.

"It was sent by the trio. It was meant as a payback for the last prank."

The fire flared as Harry's temper rose. Neville rushed over and laid a hand on Harry's shoulder projecting calm. Slowly the fire returned to its original height. Smiling Harry nodded, "Thanks Neville and you guys. I think it's time to put those little boys in their place."

"Theo's already working on a plan..."

"Harry! I've got it!" Theo came over to join them holding two pieces of parchment. Harry read them over and smirked, "I think this would work. Great job!" It was a very simple plan but perfect, just the right amount of public humiliation. They retreated to their common room to discuss it further. Draco drew out his galleon that he used to summon the others.

"Okay, Weasley, Finnegan and Thomas have overstepped their boundaries. It's time we taught them a lesson. We haven't pranked them in...how long?" Harry addressed his friends once they were all seated in their designated seats.

"A week." Neville consulted his notes.

"Right, a whole week and they pulled this stunt. Now it's time to end this farce of a war once and for all."

They spent an hour discussing it before they split, each had their own task. Everything went according to plan except for one thing, Harry

noticed something strange when he was consulting the map. Deciding to brush it off Harry reminded himself to discuss it with Remus at a later date. Awakening early the next day they watched as the Gryffindor Trio made their way into the now full Great Hall. Thankfully someone had taken mercy on them and taken down Lockhart's hearts last night.

It started at the Hufflepuff table and spread, soon the whole Hall was looking at the Gryffindor trio and laughing. Even the Professors looked amused. Fred and George had used Harry's cloak to enter their brother's dorm room and transfigure their robes and uniform. Seamus, Dean and Ron were looking glorious in Slytherin robes. The others had also added different charms and there were little heart-shaped bubbles floating around their heads, some with words inside them. They showed what the boys were thinking. There were also signs on the back of their robes confessing their love of all things Slytherin.

The best part of the prank was that all three of them were blissfully unaware that anything was wrong. They were eating like there was no tomorrow. When they finished they looked around at everyone who were still laughing at them and flashed red. When they opened their mouths to say something more bubbles floated out of their mouths which just renewed everyone's laughter. They asked each other what was wrong seeing as they could understand each other but no one else could.

The bell rang for the first class of the day and there was a mad scramble for everyone to get to class. Potions was first that day and Harry smiled as the charms they put on the Gryffindors had yet to wear off. Professor Snape came in to start the lesson and those that knew him could tell he was fighting to contain his amusement.

"Today we shall be working on the Swelling Solution. Weasley! Tell me what does the Swelling Solution do?"

Ron scowled and muttered something adding to the bubbles above his head that projected what he was thinking: "Professor Snape is an idiot."

"Twenty points from Gryffindor for insulting a professor."

"Finnigan! What's the antidote for the Swelling Solution?"

Again Professor Snape was unable to get an answer. Seamus's bubbles actually had some swearing in them that caused Professor Snape to take another twenty points from Gryffindor and give Finnegan a detention. After getting Theo to answer the questions Professor Snape sat back and let them brew their potions. Strangely enough Ron and Seamus weren't working together and their partners were having real trouble hearing them. Dean was partnered with Hermione who just forced him to sit and brewed the potion herself.

Harry had set up one of his wards on the Slytherin half of the room knowing that sooner or later an explosion was bound to go off. And he was right, not five minutes after Harry had put the ward up did Seamus' cauldron go off. The Gryffindors were all hit, most had swelling arms, legs or faces. Some even had a swelling body, Lavender at that point reminded Harry very much of his Aunt Marge. As you can imagine Professor Snape was furious, Seamus received another detention and lost Gryffindor a further thirty points. After dismissing the Slytherins who were unaffected thanks to Harry's ward Professor Snape went about getting all the Gryffindors to the Hospital Wing.

Laughing at their success Harry and his friends took a secret passageway back to their common room and started working on their homework. At lunch they let the others in on the story and watched as the Gryffindor second years slowly started trickling in. They were fully healed as such a thing was easy for Madam Pomfrey, the spells on Ron, Dean and Seamus had also worn off and they watched as Parvati let them in on the morning's events. Soon enough Harry and his friends were subjected to the glares of the three Gryffindors.

The day's surprises didn't end there though as the fourth years slowly passed around the rumor that Lockhart was dead as he was absent from their lesson that morning. Whispers broke out around the room and soon enough the whole Great Hall was talking about their DADA professor's absence.

"May I have your attention?" All the chattering stopped as Professor Dumbledore stood to address the school. "I have just received a letter from Professor Lockhart who has resigned his post of Defense Against..." He didn't get any further as the majority of the school stood and cheered. Even the professors looked happy. "SILENCE!" Everyone quickly sat down and Dumbledore continued, "Until an appropriate replacement can be found all DADA classes will be cancelled. That is all, thank you!"

Harry and his friends were over the moon with happiness. They had simply planned to scare Lockhart into confessing that he was a fraud but for the man to leave instead meant that he was more of a coward than anyone thought. They had maybe possibly charmed his mirror to show his worst fear, those he had stolen from getting their memories back. That was good news however as it meant they had more time to continue with their tasks. That afternoon during their normal DADA class Harry fire-called Remus from their common room.

"Remus!"

"Hey Harry! Is something the matter?" Remus looked worried.

"Not really, there are just some things we need to talk about. Where are you?"

"My place, I was just got back from lunch."

"Mind if I come through?"

"Not at all!"

Cancelling the floo connection Harry told his friends he should be back in time for dinner. Throwing some floo powder into the fireplace Harry called out, "Moony House." Stepping out of the fire Harry found Remus sitting at his desk surrounded by his papers. Not only did Remus have his job as Potter Regent he was also the one in charge of the Evan and Black family estates as Sirius's heir is Harry and he is in Azkaban. In between managing the three estates and doing the odd job for Dumbledore Harry was worried that Remus was overworking himself.

"Hey, really Moony you should take a break once in a while. Go out with Kingsley or some other friend."

"I'd love to Harry but there is so much to do...Anyway, what did you want to see me about?"

"Well, you see I'm in the middle of a prank war..."

"Harry if you are asking me for help to pull a prank when you should be in class..."

"Oh no, DADA was cancelled. But that's for later; see Theo had this plan to attack Weasley and Finnigan. And to do it we had to lay down some charms at night. So I took out the map and looked for Ron and Seamus in the Gryffindor Dorms. That's when I discovered something...um, how confident were you guys with the map?"

"Very! It took us the better part of two years to work on it. It's never been wrong! It was one of our finest achievements. Why?" Remus was looking thoroughly confused by this point.

"Well see, Petter Petigrew's name came up..."

"What? How is that possible? Unless..." Remus sat there deep in thought.

Harry could almost see the clockworks turning in his mentor's mind, Remus had always been so sure that it was Sirius who had betrayed his parents. But from what Harry could remember of the man he didn't seem the type. And given his discovery of his traits Harry had the feeling that it was more than just instinct telling him that. There was also Theo's reading to take into account, especially the bit about dishonesty and double-dealing.

"Where is he hiding? The Forbidden Forest? Hagrid must have come across him at some point. Not to mention the Centaurs."

"Well that's the thing, he's hiding in plain sight. He's posing as Ron Weasley's rat, Scabbers."

"Hm, well be on your guard. I'll see what else I can find out. If what you say is true...Maybe Sirius was as innocent as he claimed."

They talked some more and Harry told Remus all about their prank and the fall out. Harry smile to see Remus laughing, it was something that didn't happen often. He also told Remus of Theo's predictions which confused Remus even more. After dinner Harry was sitting in his armchair busily contemplating what the newest revelations could mean.

That was when he remembered the treasure he had hidden in his trunk. Rushing through the passage and the common room Harry headed up to his dorm room and retrieved three journals from his trunk. Slowly returning to his common room Harry took the most recent one and opened it to one of the last entries, the 28th October 1981.

Wow, I can't believe how much Harry has grown! He is the most perfect child, he never cries except for when Peter is in the room and he knows when to keep quiet and he learns so fast! He is so powerful; I hope he survives through this.

What Dumbledore said about him being powerful is true; I can see it and feel it. There is something that just doesn't feel right, it's like he's coming. I'm so scared, James says that we can trust Peter but I'm not so sure...

Harry almost dropped the book in shock, what was going on? She said Peter not Sirius! Recovering slightly Harry failed to notice the curious glances his friends cast his way. So he again continued reading.

There is something not right about Peter; he is too quiet when we talk of the war. And Harry doesn't trust him which says a lot. I will never understand why James changed our secret keeper from Sirius to Peter. Sirius, I at least know I can trust. And I'm still not sure why everyone is so suspicious of Remus, if anything the secret keeper should be him.

What has the world come to? Friends turning their backs on each other. I can't even trust my own friends who I know would never turn to the dark side. Especially Sara, how could Dumbledore even suggest she is the one who was feeding Voldermort information? She's Harry's god-mother and would never do anything to hurt him, ever.

I cannot wait for this war to be over; once Voldermort is gone for good Harry would be safe and can have a normal life without all this hiding. Well I've got to go, Harry needs his dinner.

By the end Harry was crying, he could almost feel like his mother was there with him at that very moment. Neville came over and rested a hand on his shoulder offering his silent support. Wiping his tears Harry smiled gratefully before checking his watch. It was getting late; he would have to wait till tomorrow to talk to Remus. Assuring his friends that he was okay Harry continued reading.

The very last entry in the journal made Harry's eyes pop out, it was a letter addressed to him on the day his parents were killed. Hands shaking Harry took a deep breath before he began to read hoping he could keep his emotions from leaking into his magic.

Dear Harry,

If you're reading this then I've left you and for that I'm sorry. I had hoped that we would be safe under Dumbledore's protection but your idiotic father had to go and trust the wrong person. He is coming for us that I can already tell. I hope you are happy wherever you are living, hopefully with Remus or Sirius. If they gave you to Peter, well I hope you hex him for me once you get your wand. There is so much I wanted to tell you and teach you but I do not have the time.

Remember that I love you always and that even though I will most likely die protecting you today I will always be with you no matter what you are doing. Believe in that and make the most you can out of the life you have. You will be both powerful and influential when you grow up and you have the chance to change the way things are.

Don't forget who you are no matter what people tell you. Be careful who you trust but don't hesitate to make friends either. If you have any questions there are only five people who I would trust with your life and they are Remus, Sirius, Sara, Severus and Alice.

Look for them whenever you are in trouble and they will do whatever they can to protect you. Sirius and Sara are both your god-parents and should be taking care of you now. Remus would also be around as he is your father's choice for your regent. Severus and Alice are also good friends of mine and would not hesitate when the time comes.

There are also two others who I hope will still be alive, your aunt Petunia and your great-uncle Harry (who you were named after). Although they won't be much help to you in terms of the magical world they are there if you ever need to escape.

Harry squinted at the last line it was scribbled in a hurry and he only just managed to make it out.

I have to go, he is here! Remember everything I have told you.

Love always,

Your mother

The wind in the room picked up as Harry tried to deal with his emotions. He couldn't even imagine what she must have felt writing the letter knowing that when he read it she would be dead. Now Harry knew for sure why his mother had been sorted into Gryffindor, he had always placed her as a Ravenclaw instead. Harry saw the time and looked around the room.

Most of the others have returned to their dorms. Only Draco and Neville remained now reading their books as they waited for Harry to be done. The only problem was that Harry needed to speak to his aunt as well. Sighing, knowing that it was late Harry told them to head back first. Worst comes Harry could skip breakfast and even be late to Charms the next day.

They reluctantly left Neville sensing that he wasn't quite balanced and Draco knowing that the 'I'm fine' was a lie. Once they were gone Harry opened the storage room under the floorboards of the Library and changed into his spare set of muggle clothes. That done he packed his things away before heading for the fireplace yet again.

This time he flooed home instead and was unsurprised to see that his aunt and uncle have both retired. Harry headed upstairs and setting his alarm for early the next morning got some sleep. His alarm woke him up at six the next morning and Harry yawned making his way downstairs.

There he was greeted with Aunt Petunia who having heard the alarm was armed with a massive cleaver. Harry held his hands out to show that he was unarmed. "It's okay Aunt Petunia, it's me Harry. I just needed to talk to you about something. Remember the ward; no one but our family can come onto the property without your permission." Still wary Aunt Petunia nodded and returned to her breakfast as did Harry. Luckily Uncle Vernon didn't have to go to work until that afternoon and was taking the opportunity to sleep in.

"So Harry, what did you need to talk about?"

"I was reading mum's journal last night and came across something, I didn't realize that I had a great-uncle."

Aunt Petunia was very nervous as she answered, "Yes you do. He went into hiding around the same time your mother did and I haven't heard from him since. He was your grandmother's brother and we were always close until mum and dad died."

That would mean...Daphne's grandfather. Harry smiled and nodded, "Thanks Aunt Petunia. I was just curious as to why he was never mentioned before. I've got one more stop to make before classes today so I'll see you when I come home for the summer."

Aunt Petunia nodded as she poured herself more tea; she was becoming accustomed to Harry's coming and goings. Harry placed his plates in the sink and flooed back to Hogwarts. Harry went down

to the storage room to change back into his robes and retrieve his mirror.

“Remus?”

“Hey Harry, must you call so early in the morning?”

“Yes, because I need to concentrate on my classes today.”

Remus nodded knowing what Harry’s curiosity was like. “Okay then, what is it?”

“Whose Sara?”

Harry watched as Remus’ eyes widened in surprise, “How’d you hear about Sara?”

“Mother’s journals. She’s my god-mother. How come you didn’t tell me?” Harry was becoming upset, there were too many surprises and all within such a short time span.

“I...Well, I thought she was the one who had betrayed us before that night and by then she’s moved to America to teach Charms. She was the most amazing witch. Her, your mother, Alice (that is Neville’s mother) and another witch by the name of Leila. They were our year’s equivalent of the female marauders but different. Instead of being trouble makers they were perfect academic role models. Your mother was gifted with potions, Sara with charms, Alice with DADA and Leila with Transfiguration.”

“What...what happened to the other one Leila?”

Remus blushed as he answered, “Leila...her parents were killed a year before yours and her brother pulled both of them into hiding. I believe they were headed for Australia.”

Harry bit his lip, “Do you think you could get in touch with Sara? I’d like to meet my god-mother especially as mother seems to have trusted her so much.”

“I’ll see what I can do. And Harry.”

“Yeah?”

“You’re going to be late.”

“I know, talk to you later!”

Harry smiled as he closed the connection, well that was at least one mystery solved. At least it explains why she hasn’t been around. Harry looked at his watch and cursed before running up to his dorm and swapping the DADA books he had in his bag for his Charms one retrieving his homework as well. With a last glance in the mirror to make sure he didn’t look completely horrible Harry ran all the way to the Charms classroom arriving five minutes late.

Harry apologized to Flitwick who just smiled and continued. It was like Harry had a bubble around him, there was not one single teacher who disliked him save Dumbledore. He had never lost more than five points and the professors handed Harry points like candy. Every lesson he would earn anywhere from ten to fifty points for answering questions, doing his homework and spell work. Even Lockhart adored Harry who never treated him with the same amount of respect as he did the other professors.

Chapter 24: Another Year Gone

Around Easter break, in which everyone stayed at Hogwarts, the second years were given a list of possible subjects that they could pick up for third year. Knowing how important their choices were Harry's friends sent out several letters asking their parents and/or relatives for advice. In the meantime Harry spent nearly a whole day at Potter Manor discussing his options with Moony.

Remus told Harry all about what his parents had chosen and why; James had chosen Muggle Studies, Care of Magical Creatures and Ancient Runes whilst Lilly had chosen Ancient Runes, Arithmacy and Divination. James reasoning for the first two subjects was that they might help him understand Lilly better and Ancient Runes was so that he could read stuff many others couldn't. Lily chose her subjects because she thought they would be interesting.

Remus himself had chosen the same subjects as Lily did for similar reasons, well; he said he didn't need Muggle Studies and that Care of Magical Creatures would be dangerous for him as magical animals reacted to his wolf side. Sirius had chosen Ancient Runes, Arithmacy and Muggle Studies because he didn't want to waste his time studying divination and Care of Magical Creatures. According to Remus, Peter had chosen the same subjects as James for no other reason than to follow him.

In the end Harry chose Ancient Runes, Arithmacy and Care of Magical Creatures. He thought that studying these subjects would give him a broader scope of possible careers later on, not to mention they sounded fascinating. Draco and Neville had taken the same but traded Care of Magical Creatures for Muggle Studies making Draco the first Malfoy ever to sign up for Muggle Studies. Mr Malfoy wasn't very pleased but understood well enough.

The others took the same subjects as either Harry or Draco and Neville (depending on whether they needed muggle studies or not). The only exception was Theo who traded Muggle Studies for Divination, which given his trait was a good idea and Blaise who would, like Harry, be studying Care of Magical Creatures in keeping with his ability to talk with animals.

Not long after Easter break the twins' girlfriends, the Costas, had been brought into the group. Blaise, Fred and George all assured Harry that they were good and could prove useful to their cause and had wanted to bring them in almost immediately. Harry was sitting in his armchair doing some reading for history of magic when the twins approached him.

"Harry."

"We wanted to ask you something."

"You see, we've been dating the Costa twins for a while now."

"And we thought..."

"They might be a good addition."

Harry smirked at how nervous the twins looked standing there fidgeting as they waited for Harry's answer. Marking his page and setting his book aside Harry leaned forward in his chair looking to Blaise who sat nearby listening.

"What do you think? They are your cousins."

"Personally I think they're pretty good. They're more like their father than their mother which is a good thing." Blaise sneered softly, he didn't like his aunt. "They're also healers which would be useful."

Thinking it over Harry agreed and nodded. The twins whooped and gave each other high fives. Holding a hand up Harry stopped them as he added, "Set up a meeting with them. The empty classroom in the dungeons an hour before curfew."

Later that night Harry and Draco took his invisibility cloak and used various secret passageways as Irene showed him the fastest way to get to his meeting place. Arriving five minutes early Harry took a seat on the desk as he withdrew his wand and the map. Draco took a seat in the corner hiding under the invisibility cloak.

“I solemnly swear that I am up to no good.”

Harry scanned the area and noted Professor Snape making his rounds. The twins were around the corner and there were no other prefects or teachers around. Clearing the map Harry had barely managed to pocket it when Fred opened the door open for the Costas to enter.

“Hello. Mia and Cara?”

“Yes, it’s nice to meet you Harry.”

“Blaise has told us much about you.” They curtsied and Harry smiled.

“Nice to meet you too. I don’t want to seem pushy but the curfew will be upon us soon so we had better get down to it.”

Everyone chose a table to sit on not wanting to sit in the chairs that reminded them too much of their classes. “Well, I’m not sure how much Fred and George have told you. But there is a war coming that is inevitable. You’ve met the Nott’s before?”

They both nodded intently focused on the young Slytherin, Harry continued, “They have predicted the return of Voldermort. Now it could happen anytime from now until I finish Hogwarts. But we are preparing as best as we can and will hopefully be ready for him when the time comes. With me so far?”

“Yes and I think I know what is coming next.” The Gryffindor one said with a nod.

“I agree sister, if you believe we can help you in this coming war...” The Hufflepuff one smiled.

“We are with you.” They both nodded.

“We are getting ahead of ourselves,” Harry smiled, “What do you know about our group?”

“You have people from all houses except for Hufflepuff.” Cara said frowning slightly not liking the idea of being the odd one out.

“Most are in your year.” Mia counted off.

“Except for Fred and George.” Cara nodded to their boyfriends.

“And those Ravenclaw girls, Ginny and Luna?” Mia frowned uncertain as to their names.

“You are all training hard...” Cara continued.

“Like majorly hard.” Mia interrupted.

“...in everything.” Cara finished off glaring at her twin.

They continued and Harry had to admit they were well informed. “Okay, so you know about the group. Do you know what is expected of you?”

“We would train with you and help you.”

“We would answer to you and you alone.”

“We would try and promote inter-house unity.”

“We would keep an eye out for potential candidates for recruitment.”

Harry raised an eyebrow at Fred and George who both shrugged with identical smirks, “And you are willing to swear to do all of that.”

“Yes we are.” They nodded serious.

“Draco?”

The four twins jumped as Draco appeared from his seat in the corner banishing his cushion. "Yeah, they were telling the truth." After being assured of their loyalty Harry presented them with both the animagus potion as well as their coins. There was now a Hufflepuff (Cara) in their group along with another Gryffindor (Mia). Both were, unsurprisingly, squirrels.

Their group was growing bigger by the day and Harry couldn't be happier, in early May Umbridge's anti-werewolf law went to the wizengamont for a vote and she was surprised that it had been rejected. Mr Nott having been convinced by Mr Malfoy decided to push through another law that allowed werewolves the same status as other wizards and witches. And with Terry slowly converting Susan Bones, things were definitely looking up. The only problem was that the court might give Remus full custody of Harry and that could cause some problems as far as Aunt Petunia was concerned.

Around the same time Hermione and Anthony had together discovered what the illusive diary Mr Malfoy had really was. They had all been sitting in the library studying when Hermione squealed with delight. Harry looked up from his Transfiguration essay in surprise. It was the library after all, by unspoken agreement they were to treat it like the normal library which meant little to no talking.

"We found it!"

"Found what?" Harry asked the excited Gryffindor.

"The diary!"

Hermione then went on to explain that how the diary was more or less a horcux. It was essentially a part of the dark lord's soul that had been bound into the book and when someone wrote in it, Tom Riddle (Voldemort) would attack them with legimency and then take over their body. Harry couldn't even imagine the amount of damage Voldemort could do if he had control of a student's body.

The more Harry thought about it the more it made sense. How Voldemort survived the rebounded killing curse, how the dark marks

haven't faded from Mr Malfoy and Professor Snape's arms, Voldemort's spirit running around Hogwarts on the back of some idiot's head and of course Mr Nott's prediction that Voldemort would return. No doubt he had planned on using the poor soul who would receive his diary.

"Great work Hermione!" Harry grinned knowing he had been right about the girl's research skills. "Now all we have to do is find a way to destroy this thing."

Because it was an actual soul and not just an ordinary diary most things would only damage the diary but not the soul within. So far the options Hermione and Anthony have come up with are Fiendfyre, basilisk's poison and the killing curse. Not having access to the latter two and not wanting to risk using the first Harry decided it was best to lock it up in one of the empty rooms in the dungeons until they were ready for it.

Time passed when Harry noticed a change in the group. He couldn't explain it but something felt strange, he was noticing the girls of the group a lot more. There was one in particular who would occupy his thoughts a lot but Harry didn't quite realize what it meant or how it was affecting the way he acted around her. Harry wasn't the only one with this problem. Neville was having trouble concentrating on his studies from an empathy overload as he slowly realized that the guys were noticing the girls and vice versa.

Being as innocent as they were neither side quite knew what to do and things in the group were quite tense even though they were as tight as ever. The only ones not involved in all of that were the four twins who watched the happenings with amusement in their eyes. They had agreed to not say anything and let the 'kiddies' work it out themselves.

The rest of the school year passed rather uneventfully. The new DADA teacher was an auror on loan from the Ministry for the rest of the school year and was a wonderful teacher; he taught them more than their previous two teachers combined. Although Harry and the others were already way ahead of him they liked him nonetheless, he was fair and very experienced, close to retirement age. But that didn't

really matter as half the time Harry 'listened' in on the twin's classes through their galleons.

The progress they had made on their studies has been amazing. Everyone but Ginny was holding their animagus form for at least half-an-hour with some, Fred, George, Harry and Draco holding theirs for nearly an hour. Everyone was making good progress with their spells, they were all casting completely silently but no one has progressed past fifth year spells. Harry was still the only one who can do wandless magic in general although the four twins managed to do some simple first year spells.

Hermione had also uncovered a new spell that made communicating through their coins much easier. Transfiguring some gold from Harry's mines the group came up with matching necklaces which they attached their coins to. This they wore around their neck so that they were able to keep in constant contact with the coin.

With the new spell that Hermione had found and Harry had cast, they simply had to think of whom they wished to speak to and the connection will be open. Harry had also added various other charms to both necklace and coin to ensure that neither will deteriorate with time. And so they wore their new necklaces everywhere.

Slytherin won the house cup again which was largely unsurprising given their victories on the quidditch pitch; they had won every game with nearly two-hundred point margins. Given their performance in the quidditch cup Slytherin lead Ravenclaw by a staggering one-hundred point margin for the house cup. Regardless of the inter-house competition, Harry's push for inter-house unity was going much better than he had originally thought, at least in his group. The only problem so far was that he was missing the Hufflepuff heir who remained anonymous.

After a week of lazing about, some soccer games and the odd pick-up quidditch game it was time to leave. There was a nice clearing close to Neville's greenhouses and the trees that surrounded it were tall enough to keep them hidden. With sixteen members they were able to have proper games with the two pairs of twins playing against each other. Hermione and Luna were playing referee and

commentator. The game was surprisingly even, save for Harry always beating Theo to the snitch every single time. What impressed Harry during their games was Ginny's ability to fly; he told her she should try out for the team next year as one of Ravenclaw's chasers was graduating along with their seeker.

With their trunks packed and their results coming in Harry and his friends boarded the train for their journey home. The ten second years all placed in the top fifteen positions with Harry at number one and Draco and Arianna at second and third. Ginny, unsurprisingly, placed first to Luna's second. The real surprise was the Weasley twins placing an equal second place. Given that they had only joined the study group that year after three years of mucking around Harry was highly impressed. The usual notes were handed out reminding them not to do magic at home, only this year they got another form as well. This one was for their parents or guardians to sign giving them permission to go to Hogsmeade.

Settling in the heirs' compartment Harry and his friends settled down with chessboards, books or exploding snap to while away the time until they arrived. They were all very tense as they knew the next day could determine the rest of Harry's future not to mention their own. The first day of the holidays was also the day where things between Harry and Dumbledore will come to its final conclusion.

Harry had figured long ago that Dumbledore was obsessed with control. He liked things where they were, evil Slytherins and good Gryffindors, families staying to certain houses and certain sides. But then Harry came along and started integrating the houses, a Potter in Slytherin was unheard of not to mention a Longbottom. And a Weasley in a house other than Gryffindor?

Hogwarts and the wizarding community had a long history of unity that is until recently. There is also the "fact" that Slytherin and Gryffindor had an argument causing Slytherin to swear revenge. But Harry and his friends knew differently as they talked to the two "men" and were told that not only were they blood brothers but Slytherin was never against mixed-bloods. He admitted to having a problem with muggle-borns as he didn't think they were strong enough to complete their education and that they were most likely to return to

the muggle world which Harry admitted was a fair point. It seems Dumbledore likes things so much in place he is willing to change history to suit his purpose.

Harry's guess was that Dumbledore had lost control of Harry and was now fighting to get Harry back under his thumb. If Dumbledore was to become Harry's guardian there was no telling what he'd do to him. Even without access to the Potter and Gryffindor fortune he could access the Evans and Slytherin estates and that was risky.

With various cases from all his friend's libraries Harry and Remus was going to be spending the night at Potter Manor looking over every little detail. If all goes well Harry would also be holding a party to celebrate at Evans Estate. Harry believed they had a strong case, after all one needed Potter blood to be the Potter Regent. And Dumbledore doesn't have a drop of Potter blood being related to Harry on his mother's side rather than his Potter side. And with the new laws Mr Nott had pushed through there was no way Dumbledore could contest Remus's right to act as Potter Regent.

But to be on the safe side Harry was preparing to make a speech to the wizengamont as a backup. Arianna had written his speech with help from Mrs Malfoy and Mrs Nott who were masters (or mistresses) at this sort of thing. If he pushed to take the decision to the wizengamont then Harry knew for certain that he could win. Harry grinned evilly as he and Remus worked on bringing everything together, he just loved it when a plan came together.

Remus showed up and having confirmed each other's identities they flooed to Potter Manor where they settled in Harry's study preparing. Jade popped in with the food and collected the plates when they had finished without disturbing them. Finally after midnight they fell into bed confident of tomorrow's outcome.

It was the day of the hearing and Harry was dressed in new robes Remus had brought him with his Potter cloak thrown over the top. Harry made sure he had his wand strapped to his arm, his potion case secured to his belt. Harry had considered taking his daggers with him but in the end Remus said it was too risky, if he were to be caught...well it wasn't worth it. Checking his notes one last time Harry

went downstairs to the family parlor where Remus was already waiting for him.

After a quick spot of breakfast the two wizards left for the ministry via floo. Harry subtly looked around taking in the many other fireplaces and the beautiful fountain half-way down the hall they were in as Remus led him over to the security desk at the end of the hall near the golden gates to get his wand checked. Harry hesitated when the wizard, whom Remus called Eric, asked him for his wand. It was only after Remus gave him a nod that Harry surrendered his most important possession. Still he was tense as he waited for the man to finish.

The man was surprised when the badge read Harry Potter and looked at Harry curiously. In response Harry scowled and glared back at the man. So what if he was famous? Harry wasn't in the mood to put up with awestruck fans and Remus must have picked this up because he rested a calming hand on Harry's shoulder and moved on quickly. Shooting his friend a grateful smile Harry returned his wand to its rightful place feeling a lot better.

Harry and Remus filed into one of the many lifts where there were already numerous other wizards and witches waiting for the lift to move. Harry was slowly growing more nervous as they waited for the lift to fill up. When the lift was almost full four people crammed their way in just before the door closed. Harry grinned with relief, he wasn't alone and from the read he could get on his friends emotions they were nervous too. Mr Nott was standing there sneering at anyone who accidentally bumped him as they moved up through the levels. Mrs Longbottom and Remus had immediately started a conversation about some breakthrough in Transfiguration. Harry shook his head with a smile as he talked to Neville and Theo about the next year of school and their new subjects.

All three there had a different third elective and were speculating on which subject would be the hardest. Harry said Arithmancy, Neville chose Ancient Runes as did Theo. Harry had decided that as with other languages Ancient Runes would most likely be easier for Harry than it was for the others. When they had exhausted that topic Neville,

in an attempt to dispel the nervousness he could sense in Harry discussed his plans for the party.

Finally they reached Level two which seemed to be the main level for the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Remus and Mr Nott led the way through the Auror Headquarters where Harry could see Tonks and Kingsley in a meeting with some other aurors that included their ex-DADA professor. They then went down a corridor to one of the Ministry's courtrooms.

Looking around Harry noted the similarities to the muggle courtroom he had visited with his school four years ago. The only difference was the absence of the typewriter where a man sat with a piece of parchment and a dictation quill. Harry sat with Remus up front on the defendant side, Neville and Theo took up seats in the row directly behind them whilst Mr Malfoy and Mrs Longbottom moved towards their seats on the 'jury' section of the courtroom.

Five minutes passed and the courtroom was almost full. Harry's friends were almost all there save Hermione who was unable to get away from the muggle world, they sat in the same row as Theo and Neville. Mrs Zabini gave Harry a smile as she took her seat alongside Mr Nott, Harry easily smiled back. In the judge's seat sat a stern looking witch with a monocle, Harry was strongly reminded of Professor McGonagall. Harry breathed a sigh of relief; their guess had been right after all.

Chapter 25: Matters Of Custody And Old Friends

"Court is now in session. Defendant Remus John Lupin verses Plaintiff Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore in the matter of the guardianship of Harry James Potter." Madam Jones shot some sparks from her wand to get the attention of the room. "Professor Dumbledore, if you will begin."

"Thank you Madam Bones. I would like to begin by pointing out..."

And so the court case began. Remus had a strong side and had most of the wizengamont on his side, thanks to Harry and Mr Malfoy. Added to the fact that the supposed blood wards that should have existed didn't that Dumbledore had also put some sort of compulsion charm on the letter he had left with Harry and Madam Bones was not looking happy. It was a testament to the strong bond between Aunt Petunia and his mother that Aunt Petunia had been able to overcome the spell.

Dumbledore knew he was losing and grew desperate; Harry could only guess as to why Dumbledore was so eager to get guardianship of Harry. Especially since even if by some miracle the court agrees to send Harry to live with Dumbledore the old headmaster would still be unable to access Potter property or to act as Potter regent, that job would remain Remus' until Harry became of age.

Why was Dumbledore so obsessed with controlling him? Harry frowned as he went over possible reasons why his headmaster would want to become his guardian. Surely it can't be just the wealth, the Dumbledore estate was fairly rich itself. It couldn't be political power either, could it? Dumbledore held two seats in the wizengamont and many would consider that enough to hold significant influence.

Harry was jerked out of his thoughts as Dumbledore called him to the stand. Standing Harry felt Remus pat his arm and whisper, "good luck." With a grin Harry nodded and headed up to the little box and sat in the seat as he waited nervously for Dumbledore to start his questioning. Before Dumbledore was able to say more than his name Harry felt a wave of calm and confidence wash over him and thanked Neville silently.

"Mr Potter, if you could please tell everyone what your home situation is like."

"Of course Professor, if I were to describe my life at home I'd say it was almost perfect. My aunt and uncle are both loving and supportive and I have a great friend in my cousin Dudley. What else?" Harry pretended to contemplate his answer although he had already prepared everything beforehand. "Well my cousin and I share almost everything from chores to games. And Remus is, of course, a frequent visitor. We see him about twice a month or so and he taught me all about the wizarding world, my status and whatnot."

"Chores? I'm afraid I'm unfamiliar with the term." Dumbledore's eye started twinkling and Harry snapped his mind shields into place.

"Well, it's a muggle term. It is part of the process of teaching kids how to look after themselves. For examples our tasks at the moment are simple things like setting the table, washing the dishes, bringing the clothes in, occasionally making breakfast if my aunt is unwell or helping my uncle with the garden. It gets harder as you grow older. For instance, when we were younger we might have simply helped our aunt carry things when her hands were full or helped open the doors, pass her what she needed, that sort of thing."

Harry fought to contain his smirk as he noted the approving nods of the wizengamont and Dumbledore's increasing frustration. Harry could almost see Dumbledore thinking as he looked for another approach to the situation. After that Dumbledore asked him more questions such as how many toys he was given as a child, was there any favoritism and the last one that made Harry want to roll his eyes, was there any abuse. Harry had already said he was raised in a loving and supportive home, how was that indicative of any abuse.

Soon after Harry was released and returned to his seat by Remus, who assured him he had done well and that all they could do now was wait for Madam Bones' decision. Whilst she did consider the verdict of the wizengamont in this case the final decision was her call, which is why it had been so important to get her support. Harry watched as the lords and ladies of the wizengamont left for a side

chamber to cast their votes, Mrs Longbottom smiling reassuringly at him before she left. What seemed like an eternity later, but was in reality only an hour, everyone was back in their seats and Madam Bones stood to announce her decision.

"In the matter of Harry James Potter's guardianship we have decided that although the joint custody of both Remus John Lupin and Petunia Evans Dursley has been the best situation for the boy so far Lord Potter needs to live fully in the wizarding world so that he can learn of his responsibilities and become a valuable member of the wizengamont when he is of age. Therefore Mr Lupin will have full custody effective immediately. That will be all, court adjourned."

Harry's inner circle gathered around him as they left the courtroom keeping the reporters out. Harry could barely walk; he was weak with much relief. An angry Dumbldore could be seen arguing with various members of the wizengamont making Harry feel even happier. They made it through without having to hex anyone and had almost managed to floo out to Evans Estate where they will discuss the outcome of the case when a voice called out, "Mr Potter!" Turning around together the group found Madam Bones walking up swiftly. Harry patted Mr Malfoy on the shoulder and stepped out of the circle as Madam Bones reached them.

"Mr Potter, I just wanted to congratulate you on a well presented case." She winked speaking softly, "I'm not supposed to take sides you understand but when your case arrived on my desk I couldn't help but question my niece about you, very extensively too."

Oh thank god! Harry breathed a sigh of relief as he thanked the stars that Theo had suggested converting Susan, he must have seen this, the snake.

"Susan? I didn't realize the two of you were related." Harry smiled easily pretending that he had no idea of this connection.

"Yes, we are rather close. But from what I could gather you two aren't." Madam Bones seemed less forbidding when she smiled.

"No, we're not. But I do know of her, by name. Unfortunately the house system makes it hard for me to make friends in other houses."

"I see that hasn't stopped you." Madam Bones nodded at Terry who was wearing his Hogwarts robes with the Ravenclaw crest proudly displayed.

"I try not to let it. But in this case it was through Draco here that I was able to become friends with the Ravenclaws. Draco and I hit it off immediately so it wasn't long before I became friends with his cousin and from there I was introduced to the others."

"Of course..."

They talked a little more before an Auror caught her attention and Madam Bones excused herself. Ten minutes later Harry's friends minus Hermione were gathered in the largest parlor at Evans Estate along with Harry, Dudley and Aunt Petunia.

They let the Dursleys in on what happened at the court session and Harry could sense a mixture of relief and sadness from his aunt. Harry gestured helplessly as he told his aunt of his new living arrangements. Harry looked at Dudley who nodded in understanding, it was Dudley who was with Harry every time they talked with their friends and it was Dudley who watched as Harry came close to slipping a few times. His control of his elemental magic during the Christmas holidays hadn't been perfect, Harry had almost set Piers on fire once and only quick thinking on Dudley's part had prevented it. Harry relaxed as he knew Dudley would help him make Aunt Petunia understand.

Thanking everyone for their help Harry told his friends that he would see them tomorrow for his party. Deciding that they may as well stay at Evans Estate for a while Remus went to pack up his home knowing that he will never return, he was to live with Harry now wherever that may be. Harry returned to Potter Manor to collect his trunk before going to Privet Drive to pack up. Unable to do enough magic wandlessly to easily pack up his room Harry called for Jade's help. Within ten minutes all of Harry's belongings were neatly stored inside his trunk which he floated downstairs to floo back to Evans Estate.

There he met an emotional Aunt Petunia who made him promise to visit as often as he could. It took some time but after half an hour of promises and apologies Harry was finally able to leave Privet Drive. He moved into the main bedroom on the east side whilst Remus took the main bedroom on the south side. The castle had three wings and for some reason only one of them was catered for guests. Not questioning good luck Harry began unpacking.

With a feeling of happiness Harry set about preparing for his party, it wasn't that he didn't like his family. On the contrary he loved his aunt and Dudley but he knew that he's coming and goings was very unfair to them, particularly Aunt Petunia who was always worried when he left. Finishing the invitations Harry called for Hedwig, luckily they had all already visited his estate that day or before and so he didn't need to put the address on the card. The only parents he invited were Mrs Longbottom, Mr and Mrs Malfoy, Mr and Mrs Nott and Mrs Zabini. The other parents he wasn't too sure about although he had also invited Professor Snape, Bill, Kingsley and Tonks. Harry had also decided at the last minute to invite Aunt Petunia, Dudley, Peter and Olivia.

On the day of the party Harry woke early, he was already dressed in his formal robes as he oversaw the preparations for the party. At seven Remus returned with Dudley, Peter, Olivia and Aunt Petunia. The latter three were looking a little unstable after their journey by portkey. Harry sat them down and sent one of the house elves for tea. Kingsley and Tonks arrived next, thankfully dressed up, Harry introduced his cousin, aunt and friends to the violet-haired witch and they talked for a while as they waited for the rest of the guests. Every time one of his friends arrived Harry dutifully left his seat and went to greet them. Harry saw Tonks and Kingsley tense up slightly when the Malfoys and Notts arrived but thankfully they kept calm. At last the last guest had arrived, Anthony, and Harry looked around the room smiling.

This is what he wanted the wizarding world to be like, people from all walks of life mingling together as friends. Aunt Petunia, Mrs Zabini, Tonks and Narcissa Malfoy sat in a corner talking amongst themselves quietly. Bill, Professor Snape and the Notts were

engaged in an animated discussion. Mr Malfoy, Remus and Kingsley had another corner to themselves and looked relaxed as they sipped their tea. The kids mingled in the middle of the room randomly laughing or giggling over a joke. Harry joined his friends as they waited for dinner to be served. Theo and Peter were sitting to one side having an animated conversation; Harry listened in and realized what they were talking about, muggle poetry? Shaking his head Harry laughed as Blinky announced that dinner was served in the dining room.

Harry grinned as he waited for everyone to notice his little surprise, he knew from Remus that Harry had to take the head of the table as the host and on his right and left were the guests of honor and the others were arranged in ranks. However Harry decided to throw tradition out the door, although he will still be sitting at the head with Remus to one side and Mr Malfoy on the other. The rest of the table however was arranged at random. On Remus' other side sat Peter and on Mr Malfoy's other side sat Olivia. And so on, kids and adults, muggle and wizards, poor and rich, all of them were intermixed and Harry grinned as everyone took it in stride striking up conversation with those seated around them.

After dinner the quests retired to the parlor again only this time the groups were a little different. Bill and Tonks had a corner to themselves and seemed lost in their own world. Then the rest of the females were seated together as were the rest of the guys. Harry drifted from group to group as they discussed everything from quidditch to herbology. Unfortunately it couldn't last and one by one Harry's guests left, Harry saw each to the door (or floo) until Harry, Remus, Peter, Olivia and his family were the only ones left. Harry took out the one-time portkey Remus had given him and when everyone had a finger on the portkey Harry returned them to Privet Drive. Uncle Vernon drove Peter and Olivia home whilst Harry returned home himself.

Harry liked his new life with Remus, the only problem being that owls couldn't find his manor and so he diverted his mail to a mail box that his house elves checked daily. Deciding now was as good a time as any to look into the Sirius problem Harry and Remus, with Kingsley and Tonk's help, applied for the right to visit Sirius at Azkaban and

get the last bit of evidence they need to free Harry's god-father. The more Harry thought about it the more Theo's tarot reading made sense. He had gained a new father, so to speak, and if Sirius had been innocent then the other two cards would have been telling the truth as well.

It was half-way through the second week of the holidays that Kingsley was able to grant them the right to visit. At seven in the morning after a hurried breakfast Harry and Remus left Evans Estate and headed over to Azkaban Island where they met up with Tonks, Kingsley and Draco. The hardest part in Kingsley getting them the visitation appointment was the approval for Draco to attend. Harry wanted Draco there for his skills and they were lucky that Draco could claim kinship through his mother.

As they neared the prison Harry could feel the temperature dropping bit by bit. Harry sensed something not right in the air; he remembered all these horrible things about the past and tried to focus his pyrokenisis into warming himself. Hearing a sigh Harry looked over at Draco who was moving closer to his heat and Harry smiled he rested a hand on his friend's shoulder and did his best to convey some positive emotion. It was a good thing that Kingsley, Tonks and Remus were so well versed in the Patronus Charm and were able to keep the dementors from coming too close.

Entering the prison things got even colder and Harry had to fight to keep his fire going. They were led down to one of the bottom-most cells and stopped in front of a typical prison cell that was very well warded. Harry frowned as they were forced to hand over their wands before entering. Inside the cell was the dirtiest man Harry had ever seen. A mass of filthy, matted hair hung to his elbows. He looked almost like a corpse, he was that skinny. His teeth had grown yellow during his years at Azkaban.

Harry sighed and waited for Kingsley to step in and seal the door before he spoke to the confused man. "Hello Sirius. It's me Harry."

Sirius Black, who had been looking from Remus to Tonks and Kingsley suddenly turned and stared at Harry in shock recognition.

"Harry! What are you doing here? This is no place for a kid. Moony...What?"

Smiling at his god-father's confusion Harry decided that first thing was first and decided to clean him up somewhat. Harry dropped a blob of water over Sirius and then deciding it wasn't enough Harry just blasted a burst of water at him, which had the poor man coughing and spluttering. Next he combined fire and air to dry Sirius. The difference was startling, his skin was much whiter and his hair no longer seemed so Snape like.

"So, there is much to do. But first we have like a gazillion questions for you and would appreciate it if you helped us out a little."

Sirius nodded still in shock but was hopeful that they would somehow be able to get him out of there. Kinglsey (the only one other than Tonks to have his wand) conjured a table and enough chairs for all of them to sit at. Taking their seats Harry made sure Draco was prepared before Remus began his questioning.

"What is your full name?"

"Sirius Orion Black."

"Were you the Potter's Secret-Keeper?"

"I was in the beginning but then I swapped with Wormtail, Peter Pettigrew."

"Why?"

"Because I thought Voldermort was sure to come after me leaving Lily and James safe."

"When did you swap?"

"It was barely a month before..."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

“Because at the time I was lead to believe that you were the spy. Can you ever forgive me? Both of you?” Sirius had a couple of tears eyes hoping they believed he was telling the truth and yet knowing that they couldn’t be sure without the use of veritaseum.

Harry and Remus both turned to Draco who nodded with a smile, “Every word was true.”

With a yell Harry jumped up and down excited that he finally got the truth. Remus was grinning hard and made to hug Sirius who had just noticed Draco and was confused.

“It’s okay Padfoot, there is much that we need to tell you but we don’t really have time.” Remus grinned, he wasn’t alone anymore. His best friend would be home soon.

Harry too moved in for a hug and was so excited he came close to crushing Sirius’s bones. After Remus and Harry had let go of their excitement, to a point, everyone save Sirius filed out to continue the process.

“Don’t worry Sirius! I’ll have you out of here in no time.” Harry nodded. With one last hug Harry reached for Sirius’s window and pulled more air into the cell before he left. Kingsley sealed the cell as Tonks handed him his wand.

The clearing process didn’t take long as Kingsley had recorded their conversation and along with Lily Potter’s journals Madam Bones was clearly convinced of Sirius’s innocence. Within hours of their seeing him Sirius had become a free man. Madam Bones signed papers that cleared his name and then transfer the charges for the murders to Peter Pettigrew’s name. She even dug out his wand and returned it to them.

It was barely even four that afternoon when Harry, Remus, Kingsley and Tonks went to retrieve Sirius from his prison. Draco had returned home as he had lessons with his father that afternoon. This time they were allowed to keep their wands with them and upon sighting Sirius Remus instantly conjured some robes for him. Putting off his

questions they took him back to Evans Estate where Harry summoned Blinky and Jade, who had moved into Evans Estate with him.

"Blinky could you ask the house elves to prepare something for us to eat, but make it light. And Jade can you draw a bath in one of the good bedrooms in Remus' wing? Sirius is going to be staying here so he needs to be clean." Harry grinned at his god-father as the two house elves popped out. "Come on!" Harry was enjoying himself and left Remus to say goodbye to Tonks and Kingsley.

Harry led Sirius into his bedroom that still held clothes that had once belonged to his great-grandfather and went through the wardrobe trying to find some clothes for Sirius to wear. Soon enough Sirius had a pile of clothing that could last him a lifetime even if they were a bit out of date. Harry asked Jade to take it down to Sirius' new room and pushed Sirius off to have a bath. As he waited Harry returned to Remus and they talked about passing the Black estate back to Sirius.

A cough behind them brought a halt to the conversation. Turning around Harry grinned at the sight of a clean well dressed Sirius Black. It made all the difference; the elves have given him a haircut and a shave so his face was no longer covered. He still looked sickly but his eyes shone with happiness and his teeth were no longer the rotting yellow it had been an hour ago.

"Wow, you look much better!"

"Thank you for all of this. I don't deserve it. If I had kept with the original plan..." Sirius shook his head and Harry grinned at how it reminded him of one of Aunt Marge's dogs. "...Anyway, let's not think of the past. What were you guys talking about?"

Harry shrugged, "We were talking about your estate. There is so much I need to catch you up on, but first you need food."

As Harry led both Sirius and Remus down to the dining room he could hear Sirius muttering about how Harry just had to take after Lily when it came to food. Harry just grinned and noticed Remus was hiding a smirk as he had thought the same thing not too long ago.

Remus wondered how Sirius was going to react to all the news they had for him.

Harry started eating looking up every once in a while to make sure Sirius was eating as well. Not that he had to worry; it seems that Sirius' animagus form has integrated with his human one. Sirius was eating so quickly and so much that Harry could tell he hadn't eaten in a long time, not surprising given he was been locked up in Azkaban for the last twelve years. Remus in the meantime was eating consistently but was snickering at the way his best friend ate. It was the same way back at Hogwarts after a quidditch game.

Shaking his head Harry sipped his tea thinking, what's with dad's friends? Couldn't any of them take care of themselves? Harry remembered when he first met Remus, he definitely wasn't in the same condition he is today. He had a long argument with his guardian before he could convince the man to come to Potter Manor daily to eat. Luckily, it seems, he wouldn't have the same problem with Sirius.

When both were finished Harry led them back to the parlor where they settled down for a long talk. They talked late into the night Harry and Remus telling Sirius all about Harry's animagus forms, his bloodline talents, his friends and everything they could think of including Harry's new status and his estates.

Poor Sirius was shocked beyond belief, he never thought that a Potter would end up in Slytherin but accepted that quicker than he did the news of Harry's abilities. Having been the odd one out in his family Sirius understood that blood didn't determine a person's house. But Harry being one of England's most powerful wizards at the age of twelve was much harder to believe.

It wasn't until Harry easily beat Sirius in a duel that Sirius believed his god-son really was to be the most powerful wizard since Merlin. It took a while but Sirius finally processed everything and he agreed to reclaim the Black estate in order to lessen the load on Remus. Finally Harry started yawning and decided it was time he headed back for some sleep. He had Jade direct Sirius to his new room and Harry fell asleep almost straight away.

The public's response to Sirius's innocence had been immensely amusing. Harry's friends weren't as surprised as they had already suspected the truth ever since Theo predicted Harry's future. The Daily Prophet was working overtime with various articles about Sirius's false imprisonment, Harry's part in the discovery of the truth and the real murderer, Peter Pettigrew. Now that the Black Lord was back and word that he was single as well as Harry Potter's god-father spread Sirius was getting numerous letters from various witches asking him out. Harry had to laugh as there had only been one Sirius had answered, Sara Nott.

If Harry had thought his singing valentine was bad it was nothing to the letters and song cards Sirius was receiving now. After Sara's letter had come through Sirius had asked the house elves to burn any letters not relating to the wizengamont, his friends, his businesses or Gringotts. If Harry had thought he was rich it was still nothing compared to the fortune Sirius had inherited. The Blacks have accumulated so much property and businesses Sirius's great-grandchildren could still live their life in luxury without having to work.

It was lucky that Sirius had willed his estate to Harry or else Draco would have inherited it and Mr Malfoy, who at that time had been a dark supporter, would have had access to the largest estate in wizarding England. Not to mention the Black estate was one of the largest in the world coming in just behind an American family and the Costa family. The first things Sirius did once he had control of his estate was to return both Andromeda and Nymphadora Tonks to the Black family. Whilst he was at it he also proceeded to disown his cousin Bellatrix from the family and was a step away from doing the same to Narcissa when Harry stopped him explaining how the Malfoys had changed.

Chapter 26: The Best Present a Boy Could Have

Life settled into a nice rhythm, most days Harry spent running around Evans Estate getting to know his god-father better. On the occasions that Sirius's presence was required by the wizengamont Harry would either return to Privet Drive to hang out with his muggle friends or he would floo over to a friend's house. Unfortunately for one day every week Remus gave him lessons in politics and business. Even though he was only twelve, almost thirteen, the fact that Harry was already technically a lord in his own right meant it was crucial for him to learn everything as soon as possible. His friends, Draco, Neville, Theo, Blaise and Anthony have all already started their lessons.

Luckily that still gave Harry time to have fun, he invited Draco and Neville over several times and they roamed all over the place in their animagus forms sometimes with Sirius but mostly by themselves. The three teenagers went 'camping' in the forest attached to Evans Estate for a day. They set up a magical tent and everything, Draco prepared the fire whilst the other two tested their animal forms and went hunting. Neville had tried to take down a deer before Harry stopped him. In the end they caught two ducks and some rabbits that they took back for the house elves to cook. Harry also bagged himself a fish or two.

Harry had also discovered several magical creatures a week in when he was practicing flying as a falcon. He came across a centaur herd but avoided them knowing how much they disliked humans. There were also several Dragons, Welsh Greens, whom Harry conversed with for quite a while. There were various magical insects and other small animals. But Harry was most surprised to come across a Runespoor who proved a great friend as it taught Harry more about his serpent form. Just as he was about to head back Harry came across a herd of Aethonan winged horses whom Harry spent another half-an-hour talking to. He even made friends with the lead stallion who gave him a lift back to the manor as Harry was a little lost.

As soon as he got back Harry was overwhelmed with two frightened adults; Remus and Sirius. Thanking his new friend, Rogue, Harry rushed to assure his new 'father' and god-father. Although he wasn't sure why they were so worried, even without his wand Harry was

more than capable of defending himself then most and Bill had put some of the strongest existing protections on the place. Not long after Harry returned did he start returning to the library to research. This time the topic was magical farms and magical architecture. Harry thought with the amount of land he had at Evans Estate and the sheer variety of creatures that he could start a farm that provided sheep for his dragons and food for his family as well as maybe producing enough food to export.

The guys started construction on the various buildings already located on the estate; it didn't take long with the help of some of Harry's friends. The old barn was cleared out and cleaned up, allocating space for some cattle that he was to import somehow, some space for chickens, the sheep and large storage areas for food. Harry also made sure that he had cast every silencing spell he could on the barn walls as he didn't want to be awoken by the rooster's crows.

Outside they cleared a field that was overgrown and made sure the fence was secured both physically and magically. They updated the charms on the storage building and cleaned it out. The second barn/stable that seemed to be specifically made for the herd of winged horses Harry had met in the forest was also cleaned out and the charms updated. Harry grinned when they were done, not bad for three week's work.

Aside from the renovations of the old farm Harry took time out to study and hang out with his friends. There was also his thirteenth birthday coming up which he was really excited about. He would be celebrating it at Evans Estate with his new family and the rest of his friends were coming over for a party. Two days before Harry's birthday he received a visit from Neville whilst he was moving the winged horses into the stables he had built for them. The farm was close to being ready for production now and Harry wanted as much done as he could before they returned.

“Neville! Hey, I want you to meet Rogue.”

“Hello Rogue!” Neville smiled and bowed to the winged stallion before addressing Harry, “Hey, I wanted to ask a favor if you don't mind.”

“Nah, what's up?” Harry led his friend inside where they took a seat as Jade served them tea.

“I was wondering if you could come visit my parents with me tomorrow.” Neville asked slightly nervously.

“Of course! What time are you heading off?”

“After breakfast. Ten okay? I was going to ask Draco to come if you couldn't make it.”

“Get him to come anyway. Actually I was thinking if we got the whole group together we could see if there is anything we can do to help them.”

As far as Harry knew the Cruciatus Curse wasn't supposed to have any lasting effects, it was another one of those inconsistencies in the wizarding world that made Harry suspicious of Dumbledore. Nonetheless now that they had the Costa twins with them whose blood trait was healing they should have no problems. Neville was excited and couldn't wait to get around to visiting everyone and asking them.

Harry laughed as he reminded Neville, Remember the coins?

Next Harry concentrated on the group as a whole. Hey everyone! Neville has a request to make of you all for his birthday tomorrow.

Hey, I was wondering if you could all accompany to visit my parents.

Receiving agreement from everyone except the Weasleys who were in Egypt Neville grinned, he was so glad to have friends like this.

Okay, ten o'clock at St Mungo's tomorrow.

See you there Neville!

Harry arrived at Longbottom Estate after picking up Hermione whose house wasn't hooked up to the floo network and they wished Neville Happy Birthday whilst they waited for his grandmother to come down. Once she was ready the four of them flooed over to St Mungo's. Harry fought his curiosity as they met the others and their way up to level 5, he could sense how nervous Neville was and he tried his best to project calm although he isn't sure if it's working or not. Neville gave him a weak smile as they reached his parent's room and Harry laid a hand on his shoulder.

The thirteen students followed Mrs. Longbottom to the last two beds in the room and came across Neville's parents, they lay there seemingly not aware of anything. Harry gestured for Hermione to distract Mrs. Longbottom as he drew the curtains around the bed. Everyone took up positions around the two beds and concentrated on trying to sense something, anything from the two ex-Aurors.

Harry looked at their auras and saw no problems with that, the Longbottoms were magically stronger than the average wizard and witch. Trying to get a read on their emotions all Harry could sense was fear and pain. Frowning Harry looked at the others to see if they had come up with anything. Draco was shaking his head looking disappointed. Arianna was still waving her mother's old wand around Mr. Longbottom's still form.

Neville was whimpering as he felt the fear and pain his parents were emitting. Blaise, Daphne, Luna, Anthony and Terry were all shaking their heads as well. Theo was still in the midst of some vision and judging by his expression it wasn't bad. Everyone was looking to the Costa twins who smiled as Mrs. Longbottom glowed blue.

"She's completely healthy."

"Physically there is nothing wrong with her."

Arianna finished her own examination of Mr. Longbottom coming to the same conclusion. Harry thought it over and turned to Theo who

had just come out of his vision. "It's in their minds, they had retreated when they were hit to keep from telling the Lestranges anything and now they can't get out. The Costas and Daphne and Neville have to work together for them to come back."

Not doubting his friend's ability after the summer he's had so far Harry conjured four chairs in a circle between the beds and gestured for the four Theo had mentioned to take their seats. Taking their seats they joined hands and closed their eyes.

Luna and Blaise kept a watch on Mrs Longbottom who was still being distracted by both Hermione and the healer. The others watched on in fascination as Neville's parents glowed blue, green and white all at the same time. Neville and Daphne looked to be in pain whilst Mia and Cara were intensely focused.

It took another ten minutes before the four of them collapsed. Harry rushed to catch Neville as Arianna did the same for Daphne and Blaise and Luna caught the Costas. Draco moved forward with various potions to help them regain their strength. As they were in the process of making sure their friends were alright no one had noticed the movement coming from the two beds until a voice called out, "James?"

Harry jumped and turned around to look at Alice Longbottom who was slowly sitting up in her bed. Leaving Neville to the care of Draco Harry moved over and helped support her. "No, I'm Harry. It's been a while since you were last conscious."

"Neville?"

Neville pushed Draco away as he ran over to hug his mother. Harry smiled sadly and turned to make sure that Neville's dad was in the same condition. He was also smiling as he watched his son reunite with his wife. After checking on Daphne, Mia and Cara Harry made his way over to the curtain and nodded at Hermione who smiled at the older Mrs. Longbottom and drew her inside.

By then Arianna had vanquished the chairs and everyone was their normal selves again. Neville's grandmother came strolling in and

paused shocked to see her son and daughter-in-law awake and talking with Neville. Once Mrs. Longbottom had recovered from her shock she called a nurse to come and see to her children. Not that it was necessary really, between Arianna and the Costa twins no one could be a better healer. Harry couldn't stop grinning as he clapped Neville on the shoulder, he was glad his friend had his parents back. Although it made Harry a little sad that he couldn't have the same he was still happy with the new family he had.

Neville grandmother came back from listening to a report from the nurse; the two patients were in perfect condition and were allowed home after they were through running full diagnostics. She looked at each of the students in the room in shock trying to understand how they had managed to do what a dozen of experienced healers could not. Harry gestured for the non-Longbottoms to retreat a little to give the family time to get re-acquainted; they went down the hall for a cup of tea and discussed random unimportant topics.

Not long after Neville came out and told them that his parents were able to go home. So they returned to Longbottom Estate where he knew Mrs. Longbottom (senior) would have heaps of questions. Not to mention bringing Neville's parents up to date with the wizarding world.

“So what happened? How exactly did...?” Neville's grandmother was in shocked as she had given up hope years ago of her son and his wife ever regaining consciousness.

“Where to start? It was Neville, Daphne, Mia and Cara who were the ones who managed it but it was Theo who saw it.”

“Theo...Nott?”

Theo smiled from where he was leaning against Arianna's chair and gave a slight bow in confirmation.

“And Daphne, Mia and Cara?”

They all stood from their chairs and curtsied, "Daphne Greengrass."
"Mia and Cara Costa."

"Costa? So you're healers then? And a Greengrass, magical instinct." Mrs. Longbottom nodded her understanding.

"Yes, the three of them with Neville were able to heal your minds I guess is the best way of explaining it."

At this the three adult Longbottoms grinned with pride and Neville was caught up in a bear-like hug by Mrs. Longbottom (junior). They were also thanking the other three girls profusely.

"You mean to say that at the age of thirteen you already have full control of your bloodline traits?" Frank Longbottom was caught between shock and pride.

Harry smirked slightly, "Yes, our entire group is well versed in their blood-line traits. The only ones who don't have control are the Weasleys and their trait isn't meant to be controlled."

They tried to get Neville's parents up to date on the latest happenings in the wizarding world. Harry, Terry, Anthony and Hermione were even able to help them get up to date on happenings in the muggle world. Not long after their return letters came pouring in welcoming the couple back and there was even one from the Ministry offering them their old jobs back. They hesitated though as the Longbottom title had automatically reverted back to Mr. Longbottom who would lose his seat on the wizengamont if he were to become an Auror.

It was Draco who suggested that if they wanted to become Aurors they could do so and leave the seat to Mrs. Longbottom. When everyone looked at him skeptically Draco mentioned that his great-uncle had been in the same situation and was able to give his seat to his younger brother whilst remaining the head of Malfoy until his death at which point his brother inherited the estate in full.

The idea that there was ever an Auror in the Malfoy family had everyone frowning in confusion, it was almost like saying that there

was once a Potter who was a dark lord or somewhat. Agreeing that it was the best as he was still lost in the current decade Mr. Longbottom sent his acceptance back to the Ministry.

The day grew late and everyone prepared to leave but before they did Harry got Neville to open his presents. It was obvious that no matter how expensive or well thought out the physical presents were that Neville still considered his parents' return the best present he had ever gotten and on their way out he wasn't above thanking them over and over again.

Sleeping early Harry was excitedly looking forward to what should be his best birthday yet. He was going to be hanging out with his new parents in the forest for the morning and then there was a party after lunch with all his friends. The best part of it was that he finally had a somewhat normal family of his own. Even though his aunt had always loved him Harry never had a proper father until now with Remus and he never realized how much he had wanted that.

Harry was woken early the next morning by the hooting of owls. Sitting up and rubbing his eyes still fuzzy, then he remembered what day it was and smiled heading over to the window to find both Hedwig and Hermes waiting for him. Opening the window Harry let the two owls in and took the letter off of Hermes first giving his cousin's owl something to drink. Next Harry took off the letter and package from Hedwig before letting her rest.

Dudley's letter was rather simple, he wished Harry a good birthday and that Aunt Petunia had his birthday present waiting for him to pick it up because they didn't think Hermes could handle it. The Weasleys had sent across a letter and a newspaper clipping. Looking at the newspaper clipping Harry smiled, it was about time. It seems that Mr. Weasley had finally landed himself enough gold to take his family on a holiday in Egypt.

Harry's grin at seeing his friends in the moving photograph fell off his face upon spotting the little rat on Ron Weasley's shoulder. Even though Sirius was free now the majority of the wizarding world was not yet aware of that and so the hunt for Peter wasn't going very well. Sighing Harry put the newspaper clipping to one side and read

Ginny's letter laughing at the random comments that the twins would add here and there.

Bill had gotten him some sort of Egyptian protection amulet that would keep Harry safe from evil spirits. The twins had of course provided him with a nice supply of joke shop products including some that the twins seemed to have created themselves. Ginny, ever the true Ravenclaw had given Harry a phrasebook on Egyptian Arabic. Harry flicked through it quickly and smiled, this would be an interesting language to learn.

Getting up Harry changed for the day and headed down to breakfast in the family parlor where Remus and Sirius were already waiting for him with their presents.

"Hey Harry! Happy birthday!"

"Yeah pronglet! Happy birthday!"

Pronglet that was his new name now, Sirius in particular never called him anything but that. Remus handed him his fourth present of the day.

"Oh wow!"

Harry opened the wand case and paused speechless as he saw his father's old wand lying there. Gently closing the cover Harry leaped over the distance between him and Remus giving his new dad a big hug. "Thanks Moony. It's great! Now I have a wand I can use!"

Sirius handed his present over next, "This is only part of it."

Harry raised an eyebrow as he unwrapped the present to find a photo album containing photos of all of the marauders except for Wormtail. Grinning at a photo of his father pranking Sirius Harry gave his god-father a hug as well. "This is great you guys! Best birthday yet and it's only just begun."

"Oh just you wait! It's going to get much better!"

Sirius grinned as they sat down to breakfast, after a month or so of proper eating Sirius had finally filled out and was looking healthy again. Harry smiled as he chewed on his bacon; could life get any better than it was right at this moment? He had so many people who cared for him celebrating his birthday with him.

Done with breakfast the three of them headed outside where Sirius said the better part of his present was waiting for him. Curious Harry followed his god-father out to the forest where a golden retriever was waiting for them. Smiling Harry bent to give it a pat thinking this was their surprise present.

“Hello there, what’s your name?”

“I’m Sara, I’m surprised you can speak Harry.”

Shocked Harry fell over as he watched the dog transform into a woman. She was about the same age as Sirius and Remus and she was stunningly pretty. Her brown hair fell down to her waist in waves, her eyes were a beautiful blue and she was tall and slim. She smiled and Harry noted the dimple on her cheek as Remus gave him a hand up.

“Harry meet your god-mother, Sara Nott. She’s Theo’s aunt and Sirius’s girlfriend.” Remus whispered the last part to Harry alone but the two dog animagi blushed at the comment, their sharp ears having picked up the comment.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you Harry. I’ve been looking forward to this for such a long time. I would have visited earlier only you were living with the muggles and I’m not sure if my visiting would be a good idea.”

Harry smiled excited to meet his god-mother at last even though he was disappointed that such a pretty woman was taken by his god-father.”It’s great to meet you too! Mum mentioned you in her journal and I was hoping to meet you one day. Remus said you were a charms teacher in America, what’s that like?”

The two spend the morning catching up and Harry even took a tumble with his god-parents in their animagus form. He liked Sara, she had a wicked sense of humor that matched nicely with Sirius' and she was witty, kind and of course beautiful. That said Harry invited her to stay with them until she returned to America for the next term.

"I'm not actually returning to America...you see I've taken a job as a researcher at the Ministry and hope to take over the charms position in a couple of years. Flitwick is starting to get old."

"Well then you can move in with us! The room next to Sirius is still furnished so you can live there."

Sara started shaking her head, "I can't impose on you like that. I was going to go live with my brother as I'm still under his house."

Harry waved it off not concerned, "I'm sure Mr Nott can forego your company. Besides there is so much about you that I don't know. Stay please?"

Laughing Sara looked at Sirius who shrugged with a smile, "It's your call." He was just glad to have his girlfriend back in his life. Whether she chose to stay or live with her brother it won't stop him seeing her.

"Very well. Thank you Harry I'd love to move in with you." She leaned over and kissed his cheek making the poor boy blush.

They went inside and had a pleasant lunch filled with much laughter. As the meal was winding to an end Remus sprang another surprise on Harry.

"I've got a job!"

"What? Where?" Harry was excited but slightly worried that with the addition of a job Remus would be overworked.

"Hogwarts." Remus smirked knowing that as smart as he was Harry would figure it out.

“The DADA post! That’s great! That way I can help you with your work so you don’t get too tired. And we can still hang out on the nights of the full moon.” Harry rambled for another few minutes excited to have Remus with him at Hogwarts that coming year.

It was shaping up to be a good year. Harry thought about all that would be happening that year as he started helping the house elves set up for his party that afternoon. Professor Snape and Remus had both agreed that Harry was ready for his fifth year spells and maybe second year spells wandlessly. Remus was going to be there and Sirius and Sara would be visiting occasionally using their animagus forms. If only they could find Peter and destroy the little rat Harry thought his life would be perfect.

Harry was worried though, it is no secret that Dumbledore doesn’t like the two of them, at least not anymore. Given what happened with the trial Harry believed that Dumbledore might be trying to regain control of the both of them. Sighing Harry reminded himself to hold another meeting before they returned so he could make sure that Remus was safe.

“Master Harry, your guests have arrived.” Jade popped into the room with a bow jerking Harry out of his thoughts.

“Oh right thanks.”

Harry moved into the receiving room where one by one Harry’s friends arrived via floo. Jade had set up a table to one side that was slowly being filled with presents. Setting them aside to be opened later Harry joined his friends in the formal parlor where they all had fun playing games, hanging out and even dueling each other, although less formally. Everyone was excited to meet Sara except for Theo who had already met his aunt at a much earlier stage.

It grew late and the house elves brought out Harry’s birthday cake. It was rather amazing, there was a snake and a lion featured on the top and snitches around the edges. Smiling brightly Harry cut into the cake as Sirius snapped off a photo of him. After eating their cake

Harry was forced to open his presents in front of everyone, laughing Harry conceded, sitting in the middle of the room as Draco handed him present after present.

Harry grinned as he got the usual haul of sweets, books and...dueling robes? Harry looked at his best friend in amazement. "Thanks Neville! They are wicked!" But it was Draco's present that was the most expensive; his other best friend had gifted him with a nice set of daggers that were easily concealed if he were to strap them to his legs. Speechless Harry thanked his friend over and over again.

As the night drew to a close Jade and Blinky took Harry's presents up to his room allowing Harry the chance to say goodbye to his friends. Once they had all gone Harry, Remus, Sirius and Sara drifted to Harry's leisure room. As the whole wing belonged to him Harry had asked Jade to help him with some minor renovations. He now had his own bedroom ensuite, a library/study where he did his homework and research, his parlor for seeing people and his leisure room which was equipped with a wizarding chest set that had belonged to his grandfather (the Potter one), various muggle games that he loved and even a mini quidditch stadium that had been his father's.

Harry added a total of seven books to his private collection, opened one pack of Bertie Bott's every flavor beans and stashed away another box plus two boxes of chocolate frogs before Sirius could get into them. Setting the photo album of the marauders on his bed side table Harry then proceeded to put away everything else. The dueling robes went into his growing closet, Bill's protection amulet above his bed, his spare wand was next to his first wand and the daggers lay on his robes ready for the next day.

Once the Weasleys had returned Harry called another meeting to take place at Evans Estate. With the full group there they no longer fit into the formal parlor and so had their meeting boardroom style in the dining room. Harry sat at the head of the table and Neville sat to one side, quill and parchment ready to take notes.

"Hey everyone! Thanks for coming. I just wanted to make sure that we plan for the coming year."

Harry looked around the room; all of his friends from school were there as was his new family, Bill, Kingsley, Tonks, Mrs Longbottom, Professor Snape and Draco, Neville and Theo's parents. Even Mrs. Zabini was there.

"For those of you who didn't know, Remus is going to be teaching DADA at Hogwarts this year." Everyone clapped and cheered. Smiling slightly Harry continued, "Now it's no secret that Dumbledore dislikes us both..."

"Dislike is putting it lightly." Blaise called from his position near the other end of the table.

"...Okay, he hates us. But moving on..." Harry mock glared at his friend, "I personally believe that Dumbledore wants Remus close at Hogwarts so that he can control him and thus me."

Receiving various nods and murmurs of assent Harry picked up where he left off, "Now we can't let Dumbledore know that we are on to him. We have to protect Remus subtly."

It was like the last time they were plotting against Dumbledore only they had a couple of extra people to help. They finally agreed that Remus and Snape should at least put on the façade of still hating each other. Harry actually smiled at this idea as it was no secret he and Snape was friendly, so if he were to say get involved in some of these fights it could be fun. Harry and Luna would make sure that all the paintings looked out for any suspicious activities. They would also be asking their house ghosts (the Grey Lady and the Bloody Baron) to keep an eye out for trouble.

They've also decided to up their training. With their access to a secure floo network Tonks and Kingsley would be coming in several times during the year to give them extra training sessions. Tonks' mother and Sirius' cousin would also be coming in to help the girls with some healing training. The ex-death eaters also mentioned getting in some of their professional trainers for the kids.

There was a full moon two days before school started and Harry was excited as Remus hadn't allowed him to accompany him last month. But with Sirius and Sara there the three animagus were easily able to handle the werewolf and so they ventured into the surrounding forests not long before the moonrise Harry transforming into his stag form or sometimes his tiger form whilst Sirius became his usual dog-like self as did Sara. It was the most exciting adventure Harry had had in a while, the four animals rolled around playing with one another.

The day after though was painful as they didn't get back until after the sun had risen and slept in till noon whilst their injuries caught up with them. All four had various bruises and scratches from their various wrestling matches. Luckily Draco and Arianna had arrived to spend the day with them and Draco was able to locate Harry's pepper-up potions whilst Arianna healed their cuts. One nice big lunch and a good proportion of chocolate later Harry, Remus, Sirius and Sara were their usual selves again.

Too soon for Harry's taste the summer was over and he was packing his trunk ready to head back to Hogwarts. Sirius was the only one to remain living in Evans Estate and had his own plans for the year. He was to clean out one of his family estates out in the country with the help of some of Harry's elves, Bill and even the Longbottoms have offered their help. Sirius was also to start running the farm with the help of the Evans house elves. Within the last couple of hours before they left there were things flying around through the air as Harry and Remus summoned various belongings to them.

Chapter 27: Surprises

It was time for Harry to return for his third year; Harry let Remus floo out to Kings Cross before following himself. Harry was happy to see that several of his friends have already arrived including Draco and Arianna, the Weasleys, Blaise and the Costa twins. They stowed their trunks in the back and settled into their usual compartment which had again enlarged itself to accommodate the added additions. It was like a repeat of Harry's birthday party; the only difference is that the Weasleys were there and the Dursleys weren't.

They talked about the end of the holidays until the train started moving and the kids had to run to jump on. Settling back for another long train ride back to Hogwarts Harry and Theo settled down to a nice one-sided game of chess. The others were playing chess as well, reading or else just generally catching up. The four twins however were a different story; they had a corner of the compartment to themselves and caught up in their own way.

They arrived at Hogsmeade station undisturbed and piled into the horseless carriages that took them the rest of the way to Hogwarts. Harry, Draco, Neville and Remus shared a carriage and they whiled the time away by getting Remus to teach them the Patronus Charm. Ever since their visit to Azkaban Harry and Draco had been eager to learn the spell, researching it as much as they could.

The group headed into the great hall separately not wanting to let on that they were in fact friends. The students headed for their house tables as Remus took his seat next to Professor Snape, who sneered as Remus drew closer, at the head table. Harry was watching his guardian which is when he noticed a red-headed man seated next to Hagrid talking animatedly, most likely about magical creatures.

"No way! I can't believe the Weasleys didn't tell us." Draco sneered up at the man.

"You're not even taking Care of Magical Creatures." Harry shook his head as he glanced across the room at the other Weasleys. They all seemed just as surprised, their brother must not have told them.

“That’s beside the point, this is valuable information...”

“Which they didn’t know.” Harry interrupted.

“What?”

Nodding his head in the twins’ direction Harry watched Fred, George and Mia discussing the new professor. They were obviously plotting something as they continued to glare at their brother.

“Oh.”

They waited impatiently for the sorting to begin, at least this time they weren’t interrupted by the human bludgers who were smart enough not to comment. The entire table was watching Harry and his friends carefully. There was a lot of elbow room to either side of Blaise and Daphne who were sitting on the ends of their group.

“Lupin, David.”

What? Harry looked to the front of the room in shock. Harry saw a boy who was obviously somewhat related to Remus heading for the sorting hat. Harry turned to Remus who seemed just as shocked, how can Remus not know that he had a son? Or was it a nephew?

“Slytherin!”

Clapping along with the rest of the table Harry couldn’t help but laugh as David moved to sit opposite him only to be told off by Flint. Harry waved him off eager to meet the boy who was likely to be a close relation. “Hello, I’m Harry Potter. Are you by any chance related to Remus?” Before the little boy could answer Harry’s attention was drawn back to the sorting as another student was sorted into Slytherin and took a seat next to David looking at Harry cautiously.

The second last name Professor McGonagall called was yet another surprise. “Weasley, Olivia.” Harry looked over at Ginny in shock, he knew she was the youngest of her siblings but hadn’t thought that she

might have cousins. Of course he really shouldn't be surprised, the Weasleys breed like rabbits.

“Slytherin!”

At this the entire Great Hall froze in surprise. There was not a single soul in that room that was unsurprised with the surprise the sorting hat had just thrown at them. Harry was the first to stand and applaud the young red-head so, unsurprisingly, the entire Slytherin table followed soon after.

Smiling to herself, Hogwart's newest Weasley took a seat on the other side of David who nodded his welcome. The other boy sitting opposite Neville also reached over to pat her on the back as they turned to watch the last student step forward. It was Olivia's twin. Another set of Weasley twins at Hogwarts, Harry looked up to Professor Snape to see him sneering most evilly.

Yep, things would definitely be interesting this year...”Gryffindor.” Harry whipped his head to look at the sorting hat in shock. The Gryffindor table clapped politely as it welcomed the last Weasley to its ranks. The poor girl looked like she was going to cry as she looked over at her sister. Fred and George clasped her on the shoulder as they forced her into the seat in between them.

Time to get started on the year's business, this could work out rather well. “David right? So, I was wondering. Are you related to Remus up there?”

“I...I was told he's my father, sir.”

Harry's eyes widened. The boy was only two years younger than him. What happened? Remus wasn't the type to...sleep around Harry thought.

“And what's your mother's name?”

“Leila Wilkes.”

Harry frowned inwardly but nodded and smiled at the boy. "I think we're going to need to talk later." He then turned to the other two first years. "Hello, I'm Harry Potter. What are your names?"

"Olivia...Olivia Weasley. Ginny's told me about you." The girl looked like she was about to cry.

Harry grinned, "Nice to meet you, Olivia. And what about you?" He turned to the other boy and whilst waiting for him to summon his courage he silently asked Neville to calm down the distraught twins.

"Tyler Peterson..." The boy looked nervous as he eyed Harry's forehead.

"Pleasure. You three knew each other before sorting then?"

"Yes sir, we met on the train." Olivia answered, her Weasley courage coming through.

"Very good. Now I'll leave you to get to know the other first years. But I'll look you up in the common room later tonight."

When Remus was introduced the clapping was centered around the Slytherin table who knew that this man was their leader's guardian and friend. Charlie, by contrast, was applauded by the Gryffindor table, all probably having heard stories of the last seeker to lead their house to victory in the quidditch cup.

It was a great feast but Harry wasn't really focused. He was waiting for the room to clear so that he could speak to the Weasleys and his guardian. Finally the desserts faded from the tables and the prefects rose to escort the first years to the common room. It took a while but eventually the hall was empty of everyone save Harry and his friends, Charlie and Remus.

Hermione had reluctantly left with the other Gryffindors not wanting to get into a fight with Ron so early on. Even Professor Snape had retired not wanting to risk the headmaster catching him with the group.

“Congratulations Charlie!” Harry smirked as he reached the head table.

“Um thanks I guess...” Charlie looked at the bunch of teenagers and swallowed. His siblings were looking particularly murderous and he now regretted not telling them. “Hey guys...eh...surprise?”

Ginny put her hands on her hips in a manner that was eerily like her mother. Fred and George had crossed their arms and were glaring at their older brother various pranks running through their heads.

“Okay. I’m sorry, I thought you’d like the surprise and I guess I was wrong...”

“Oh yes! You were.” Ginny poked him before she left with the Ravensclaws.

“You better watch your back.”

“You never know when something...”

“...bad is going to happen.”

“And we wouldn’t want to see you get hurt.”

“Not at all brother dear.”

Harry sighed as the twins left with their girlfriends. “Never mind that, Hogwarts will watch out for you.” He then turned to Remus. “We’ve got heaps to talk about, although I’ve got some business to attend to in the Slytherin common room first but I’ll hopefully be back before curfew. Test him; see if he is worth recruiting.” Harry nodded towards Charlie.

“I know but take your time. I guess I’ll be busy anyway.”

Laughing Harry nodded to both of his professors before leading the Slytherins down into the dungeons. Not bothering with the password Harry reached out and laid a hand on the stone wall waiting as the

school recognized his magic and allowed him access. Another advantage to being an heir of Hogwarts Harry thought with a smirk, he could get into any password protected area.

Upon his entrance the common room fell silent. Harry continued to smirk as he gestured for the two first years to follow him, which they did after a questioning look at Flint. Ignoring the rest of the room Harry said goodnight to Daphne, Blaise and Theo. With Draco, Neville, Olivia and Tyler following him Harry entered his dorm room to find it in more or less the same condition he had left it in.

The house elves had, of course, been by to clean up though. Sitting on his bed with a sigh Harry looked at the two first years and drew his wand to conjure chairs for them. Draco and Neville took seats on their own beds as they waited for their own instructions.

“So Olivia, what do you think of Hogwarts so far?”

“I...its very nice, sir. I only wish my sister is here with me...”

“Understandable, but just because you are not in the same house does not mean you would not always be close. Our friends, the Costas, they are in separate houses and they are as close as Fred and George.”

“Really?” Olivia looked up hopefully. She might have the makings of a true Slytherin but she was still young and the first Slytherin Weasley...ever. Harry smiled and nodded in response.

“And you Tyler. How are you settling in?”

“Very good...sir.” Tyler reminded Harry a lot of Neville when they had first met and Harry knew that the two first years were going to help each other nicely.

“Right, down to business. I suggest you both stick together. Help each other. I will assign guards for you just in case, I know Ronald is going to react badly to this.” Olivia nodded grimly. “But that’s another

thing I would like you to help me with. Flint has explained our new system?”

“Yes sir...” Tyler nodded nervously wondering if they were going to be put straight into the fifth rank.

“Good, good. Now, if you do this task for me and do it well I will ensure you are placed in third rank by the end of the year if not second.”

That caught their attention Harry thought with a smirk, all Slytherins are the same, offer them power and they can't say no.

“Now your task if you choose to accept would be to spy on your cousin, Ronald. I particularly want to know the whereabouts of his rat, Scabbers. Use your sister if you must, what is her name?”

“Caitlyn, sir.”

“Yes, Caitlyn. I'll make sure the...other...twins and Ginny are all informed of our plans. I'll be around, report once a week. Tyler, help her in any way you can and report back as well. David is going to have another task of his own. Any questions?”

“Just the one, sir. Um...how much should I tell my sister?” Olivia fidgeted nervously. It wasn't an easy thing separating twins let alone forcing them to keep secrets from each other Harry realized.

“Good question. At the moment don't tell her anything, just talk to her and ask the odd question about Ronald. Subtlety is the key, Flint will be teaching you that later this week or next week.” Harry smirked as he thought of his own lessons. He had been the furthest behind at the beginning but in the end he was the furthest ahead. “I don't expect too much. Let Fred and George talk to her for a while and then I will give you the go ahead.”

Nodding both first-years agreed to the task and said their goodnights. “Well, it's been an interesting first night.”

Harry looked to Draco who was resting on his bed supporting his head with his hands. "Yes and its still early. Who wants to come with me to talk to Remus?"

Sharing a look Draco and Neville both shrugged, "Guess we're both coming." They said in unison.

"So be it."

Harry retrieved his cloak and his map and made his way downstairs to where the common room was still reasonably filled. Having picked up David they made their way to the passageway and were about to head on through when Flint caught Harry's attention.

"Harry, sir, I have something that I believe should be yours to assign. And Professor Snape has given his consent for you to choose my replacement provided you tell him by week's end."

"Continue." Harry said with a raised eyebrow noticing that the entire common room had gone silent and was watching them intently.

"It is the Quidditch Captaincy. I personally believe it should be yours, but Professor Snape wasn't sure you were ready for it or..."

"I'll let you know who I decide when I decide. And Professor Snape will wait until I have decided."

Harry took the badge from Flint and opened the passageway for Draco, Neville and David to go through. Nodding to the room Harry went through next and sealed it so that no one could follow them. They arrived in the common room and took their seats.

"Quidditch Captaincy, what to do? Any ideas guys?"

"I think you should take it Harry. You are the leader of Slytherin, it is your right. Besides they would have a hard time listening to anyone else." Draco advised.

“Me too. We could help you with the organizing and Theo can write game plans for you. All you need to do is to inspire. It’s what you are good at.” Neville nodded.

“Right then, so be it.” Harry fastened the quidditch badge to his robes before addressing his next issue. “Our group is expanding at an extraordinary rate but I don’t think everyone is ready to be on the inside. What do you guys think of a sort of outer circle?”

“Can we speak in front of him?” Draco looked at the confused first-year suspiciously.

“He’s most likely Remus’ son and so he will be my brother, may as well get used to him. So outer circle?”

“Actually that might be a good idea. Cause there are so many people we could use but aren’t worthy to be initiated into the group.” Draco nodded as he thought of some of the students he had met that could be useful to their cause.

“Again, I agree with Draco. Like the new Weasley twins, we can use them and tell them enough but not everything.”

“Great! Nice to know you approve. Now we just have to run it by Remus and Professor Snape. Now let’s get going or we’re never going to get to bed.” Harry withdrew his invisibility cloak and the map before handing both to Neville. “You and David take the cloak and the map. We’ll meet you in Remus’ office.” Harry signaled for Draco to transform.

Harry, in snake form, and Draco, in ferret form, made their way silently through the corridors darting behind suits of armors or tapestries when Irene warned them or when Harry picked up a person’s scent. Draco was close to being eaten by Mrs. Norris when Irene showed them a secret passageway that let them get away safely.

Harry and Draco made their way into Remus' office and transformed. Harry opened his mouth to say hello when he stopped in shock, Charlie was there.

"Shit." Draco spat behind him.

"Language young Malfoy." Remus reprimanded him.

"Sorry Remus." Draco smiled innocently before silently addressing Harry. What do we do now?

I have no idea, it depends on how much Remus told him. But we got to clear this up before the others get here.

Agreed.

"Stupefy." Harry flicked his wand at his newest professor. "Alright Remus, how much did you tell him?"

"Not much, I was getting to the part about the new side when you two appeared."

"What? But you've had ages. Okay, I'll tell him. But before we do that." Harry told Remus about their idea for having a new outer circle. They will have to discuss it in more detail but Remus agreed to the general idea as well as making Charlie and Bill a part of that outer circle.

"Also, what's up with David? He's obviously a Lupin, he was even told he was your son..."

"Did he say who he's mother was?" Remus suddenly looked tired and Harry knew that the full moon was still ages away.

"Leila Wilkes." Harry raised an eyebrow as he remembered the last time Remus had mentioned a Leila.

“Yeah and he’s eleven...that’s about right. I didn’t think...me a father...”

“Relax and explain it to me slowly.” Luckily they had time with the number of secret passages they had taken, the others were still a fair way behind.

“I told you her and her brother went into hiding. I’m the only person in England who knows where they are hiding. When...your parents...I went to visit Leila not knowing who else to turn to. Unfortunately I was called back here not long after and told that I was to be your Regent and all that. I never knew she was pregnant.”

Harry lay a calming hand on his sort of dad’s shoulder. “That’s in the past now. But he’s here and he needs his father.”

“I know, but I don’t know what to do.”

“Sure you do. Just treat him like you do me.” Harry grinned and returned to his seat just as David and Neville arrived.

“Dad?” David looked frightened as he stared up at the man he has been hoping to meet for the last ten years.

“Yes David, I’m your father. How’s your mother?”

“Okay I guess, but she’s scared about me leaving the wards.”

Remus nodded, “Well when term’s done you can stay with me and Harry. You’ll be safe.”

David looked hopefully between the two of them and smiled, “That would be great.”

“Great! Can you guys take him back? Me and Remus still have to deal with Charlie here. I can head back myself.”

“Oh no! I’m staying, you’ll need me” Draco protested.

“Yeah, I can take care of David.” Neville nodded.

Sighing Harry waved his hand and Neville and David disappeared under the cloak again. Once they had left Remus awakened Charlie. “Wow, what happened?”

“Sorry about that.” Harry shrugged apologetically. “We have so much to tell you so please listen and don’t interrupt.”

Charlie looked around him in surprise his mind still trying to catch up. “Okay...wait a minute! You guys are animagus!”

Harry looked at Draco who nodded. Charlie’s eyes were unfocused for a second before he snapped back. “What were you saying?” Draco’s bloodline trait has grown over the summer. Looking into it further they discovered that many of their traits will develop as they grew older. Draco’s had already progressed to the point where he was able to manipulate a person’s memory for good or bad.

Harry, Neville and Daphne were the only other ones who would expect their traits to progress further. According to Mr. and Mrs. Longbottom the Longbottom trait will reach the point where Neville will be able to read a person’s mind as well as their emotions and if he were really powerful, control their mind. Daphne’s magical sense will grow stronger as she does to the point where she can sense year old spells that have been cast on a certain object.

At that moment though, Harry, Draco and Remus were busy telling Charlie everything but they didn’t give him any details only a general overview. They told him which students were loyal to Harry but left the adults out aside from the obvious; Remus, Sirius and Snape. They told him they were preparing but in what way? They didn’t say. They also mentioned that there was going to be an inner and outer circle.

“So will you join us? If you did you will most likely be under the command of the twins or Ginny.” Harry asked.

“I...can I think about it?”

“As much as we would like to give you that luxury, no. Security’s important here; if you decide to decline we would wipe this conversation from your mind and never speak of it again. But if you do then you have to swear loyalty before you step out that door.”

“Um...” Charlie went through everything they said and had to agree. Bill had already mentioned it over the summer, everyone knew that Voldermort wasn’t really dead. But Dumbledore was content to let the wizarding world fall into a state of complacency. “Okay, I agree.”

Draco confirmed both his acceptance and his oath before they let Charlie retire. That done Harry and Draco once again transformed and made their way back to their common room.

Chapter 28: Talons and Tables

When Harry, Draco and Neville entered the great hall the next morning the room fell silent. Ignoring everyone Harry made his way to his usual seat and sat. He noticed the first-years weren't sitting opposite him this time and he had a clear view of the tables, all of whom were still watching him as he piled food onto his plate.

What're they looking at? Harry scowled as he started eating.

Beats the hell out of me, eat up. We've got...Arithmacy first up. Draco consulted his timetable as it reached him.

Exactly, we've still got to find the place. Neville had also received his and was studying it as he ate.

Guys, you forgot. I do have Irene in my head. We could be the last to leave the hall and still be the first to reach the classroom. Harry snickered as he looked at his own timetable, they did have Arithmacy first and then Charms before Harry had Care of Magical Creatures.

True.

Good point.

The rest of the meal passed in silence. Harry nodded to David when he walked in gesturing for the first year to sit with them. They were like brothers now and brothers watched out for each other. Harry waved a hand for Flint to pass David his timetable.

"So David, what's your first class?"

"I...Defense with...dad."

Harry grinned, "Relax, dad's great! And first-year defense is not too bad. If you're anything like dad than you'll do fine." Harry hadn't even realized he had called Remus dad. It seemed so natural to him now.

“Oh okay. Thanks Harry.” David grinned as he filled his plate and began to eat. Seconds later Tyler dropped down beside him and joined him.

“No problems, what are brothers for?”

Harry gave David a last smile before he and the other third years left for their first class. Again Harry was right, Irene not only gave them directions to the Arithmacy classroom but told them of some secret passageways and other shortcuts that had them arriving nearly fifteen minutes early.

The classroom was already open so they went in and took their seats. Luckily the other girls weren't in the same class and they didn't have to put up with them. They took their books out and began reading as they waited for the rest of the class to arrive.

“Well, well, I've never had students arrive so early.”

The Slytherins turned around to note a tall, fairly beautiful woman enter who they assumed was Professor Vector. “Forgive us if we weren't supposed to...”

“No, no it's good. Nice to see students so enthusiastic. We'll just wait for the others then shall we.”

She settled her books on her desk and started writing notes onto the board. The others started trickling in as Harry and the others began to take down the notes. Harry grinned when his Ravenclaw friends walked in and sat on their table. Harry nodded to Hermione which she returned but neither did more than that. There were another two Ravenclaws and all of the Hufflepuffs but interestingly enough Hermione was the only Gryffindor present.

“Okay class, let's begin!”

It was an enjoyable lesson even aside from the homework they got. Harry was reminded of the mathematics homework he had helped Dudley with, Professor Vector was a great teacher and she made

everything enjoyable. Harry and his friends were excitedly talking about the lesson as they made their way to Charms.

Luckily they were with the Ravenclaws this year which made things easier. After lunch Harry left with Blaise, Crabbe and Goyle, the only other Slytherins taking Care of Magical Creatures. They were with the Hufflepuffs and Harry was excited yet apprehensive at the same time. It was no secret that Crabbe and Goyle have done their fair share of bullying; they particularly targeted the boy Justin.

They arrived early and Harry and Blaise sat down, opened their textbooks and started reading. A couple of minutes passed and Harry looked up to see the Hufflepuffs arriving. All four of them were there and Harry nodded a greeting before he returned to his reading. Charlie, or Professor Weasley, had yet to arrive and so the Hufflepuffs took their own seats as they waited.

“Um...Harry?”

Looking up Harry spotted Susan Bones standing in front of him fingering her plait nervously. Giving her a friendly smile Harry closed his book and nodded, “Susan.”

“Yeah, I was wondering. Terry told me about what you guys were doing and I was wondering...”

Harry sighed and waved Crabbe and Goyle off to give the three of them some privacy. “You wanted to join?”

“Yeah, my aunt says you are a good group and I’ve noticed how close you were. I also agree with you guys about...” Susan looked around nervously not sure if they were being watched.

“Okay, meet us in the kitchens after dinner and we can discuss it then.” Harry nodded his approval. Terry had been right, Susan would be a good person to have on their side and through her they could persuade her aunt.

“Could I maybe bring Hannah?”

Harry looked over at the other Hufflepuff and measured her power levels. She was rather strong for a muggle-born and she had the right aura. "Okay, just the two of you."

Susan nodded but was prevented from saying more as Charlie had arrived. "Sorry I'm late. I'm your new professor for this subject. Now please don't go calling me Professor Weasley, it makes me feel old and I'm not much older than yourselves so you can call me Charlie. Right, I won't bother with the roll as it's obvious you are all here. So we can get straight into it. Now this is a fairly easy class, you do the homework, make an effort to participate and you will be guaranteed a good mark. Questions?"

The others shook their head and Charlie nodded, "Great! Start reading Chapter Three and I will be back with the creatures."

Harry opened his book and flipped the page and began reading. They were studying Hippogriffs today, Harry looked at the picture and vaguely recalled seeing one near the border of Evans Estate but he didn't have time to talk to it.

"Ooooh!" squealed Hannah, pointing to where Charlie was riding a hippogriff that was making its way over to them.

Harry caught his breath, he had seen some truly amazing creatures in his life and the Hippogriff would be right up there. It was part-eagle and part-horse but its feathers were a brilliant array of colors. "Right, this is a Hippogriff. Because there are so few of you in this class I thought that you could all just take turns with Buckbeak here. Who wants to go first?"

The Hufflepuffs were looking nervous, Blaise bored and Crabbe and Goyle were eyeing the talons with fear. So Harry closed his book and stood. "Great, Harry. Come a bit closer. Let's see how well you have read that book of yours. I'll be here just in case. If you forget anything just call out."

Harry nodded as he moved closer to the giant bird, trying his best not to blink Harry stopped ten meters away and made a bow keeping eye

contact with the great creature. Harry waited backing up slightly, he could always talk to the bird but he didn't want to reveal his skills.

Then when Harry was about to take another step back the hippogriff suddenly bent his front knees and sank into a bow. Crabbe and Goyle clapped enthusiastically as Harry walked over slowly and began patting the bird on his beak. "How does he treat you, the red-head?" Harry whispered softly.

"He's great! He treats me well, not like the big guy; the big guy is always tugging me around with that big chain of his. But the fire man is nice, he is always careful."

Harry grinned and thanked the hippogriff, "Would you like to meet my other friends?"

"If they can scratch my ears I suppose it will be okay."

Harry laughed and bowed to the bird again before returning to the others. He whispered to Crabbe and Goyle to scratch the Hippogriff behind the ears. "Well done Harry. Perfect, full marks. Who would like to try next?" Charlie grinned.

One by one the rest of the class went over to say hello to Buckbeak. Blaise was the only other one to get full marks as they had the same ability. Most of the others did okay except for Ernie Macmillan who had accidentally treaded on one of Buckbeak's front claws and thus the bird reacted accordingly. Charlie was able to get the bird to back down quickly and Blaise rushed over to calm him. "It's okay. It was an accident. He didn't mean to tread on your toes like that."

Hannah rushed forward and healed the small cut in Ernie's arm. Ernie stood up and looked at the bird cautiously and somewhat nervously as he bowed again, "Forgive me Buckbeak. I did not mean to step on you." Blaise let go of Buckbeak as he tread forward and butted Ernie slightly in the chest making the Hufflepuff freeze with fear.

The class walked up the hill talking about the class excitedly, even the essay on how to avoid insulting Hippogriffs couldn't dampen their

moods. Or at least Harry, Blaise and the girls did, the other boys were giving each other death glares.

“Alright stop! Crabbe, Goyle apologize now! Justin, Ernie please forgive them. We’re going to be in the same class for the next two years. Won’t it be better if we got along?” Harry was unknowingly asserting his authority using his gift of Magical Leadership, he rarely used it and even when he did it was unconsciously done.

“Yeah, guys, stop being prats. In case you haven’t noticed, things are changing. If you don’t move with the times you’re going to get left behind.” Susan poked Justin hard in the arm.

“Really guys, you can’t hold onto these grudges forever. It’s time to grow up.” Hannah whacked Ernie on the back of his head.

“We really are sorry. We were being stupid, but we won’t do it again.”

“Yeah we promise.”

Crabbe and Goyle were actually sincere as they apologized not wanting to offend their great leader. Ernie and Justin, surprised by their sincerity finally relented. “That’s okay, I forgive you.” Justin nodded patting Crabbe on the shoulder.

“Yeah, it’s in the past. No need to go there again.” Ernie held out his hand to Goyle who took in his grasp and shook it.

All eight of them were chatting amiably the rest of the way to the Great Hall where they split up outside not wanting to cause a riot. Harry took his seat and started talking to David about his first day when Draco and Neville dropped down beside him.

“Hey guys, how was Muggle Studies?”

“Alright.” Draco shrugged noncommittally as he started eating.

“Great! I have a question though...how does electricity work?”
Neville scratched his head confused.

Harry laughed, “That will take some explaining. I might have one of my old science books in my trunk; I’ll lend it to you.”

“Thanks Harry.”

Harry told all his friends about the meeting and they cut dinner short and headed down for the kitchens. He hesitated for a second as they left the table then decided why not. “David, want to come with us?”

“Um, sure I guess.” David looked at the big bunch of third years nervously.

“They won’t hurt you. We’re like brothers now so that means I will look out for you.” Harry slung his arm over his brother’s shoulders and directed him down to the kitchen where they found the Ravenclaws waiting. Nodding to them Harry tickled the pear and they entered.

“Master Harry.”

“Hey Jade! I want you to meet David; he is Remus’ son and my new brother.”

“Pleasure, Master David. If you need anything, don’t hesitate to come and find me.”

“Can we get some tea please Jade?”

They settled at the Hufflepuff table as Jade and several other house elves brought tea and biscuits. Daphne opened the map and kept an eye on it as the four twins joined them. They talked for a while; Harry introduced his idea of having an outer circle that was met with approval by everyone. David was being introduced to everyone when the portrait door opened.

Hufflepuff girls. Daphne warned them.

They drew their wands and aimed it at the entrance as the girls stepped through. Susan and Hannah came in and turned to the nearby house elves when they noted the wands pointed at them and stopped.

“Um...hello?”

“Who was injured in Care of Magical Creatures today?” Harry pointed his wand at Hannah who was twirling her pigtails nervously.

“Um...Ernie, but I wouldn't call it an injury...” Hannah trailed off as Draco stared at her.

“Good, come take a seat.” Harry gestured towards the two empty seats opposite him.

The wands were put away and Jade brought them another two cups. Harry nodded his thanks and asked her to watch the entrance. They questioned the two girls fairly thoroughly and hat along with Anthony and Terry's assurances allowed the two girls entrance into the inner circle. They now had eighteen members not including the adults but Harry sensed there was still room for two more. They were still missing the Hufflepuff heir after all.

They spent another hour telling the girls everything they needed to know, the location and password of the common room, who was involved, what was involved in being a part of their group and so on. Training session times and anything else they could think off.

“Master Harry, the headmaster is heading this way!”

Harry's eyes widened as he reached for the map. Jade was right Dumbledore was just around the corner. Irene, a little help here, please?

Where the headmaster's seat would normally be you will find a loose tile. There is a passageway under that.

Thank you.

“Guys, where Dumbledore’s seat is. Look for a loose tile.”

Fred and George walked over and found the loose tile. “Good now let’s go! Animagus forms are faster. David, Hannah, Susan you guys go first. We will follow.”

The three without animagus forms climbed down as the others with small enough forms transformed. Neville and Ginny went next as their forms would not have fitted down the passageway. The others dropped in next and Jade closed the passageway above them. They flew or ran down the passageway until they reached the end. David and Neville pushed on the tile above them and they all filed out.

They were in their common room. Everyone transformed back into their human form and collapsed tired out from the run. Harry took one look at them and shook his head; they have been inside too long, it was time for some physical training as well. He went to their storage room and found two of the last four vials of animagus potions. He returned and handed them to the new girls.

“Here take these; you should have new seats...” Harry looked behind him as three armchairs appeared. Two were marked with the Hufflepuff crest and the other with the Slytherin crest. David’s chair also had a wolf marked into the back.

Hannah and Susan took the potions and looked at them cautiously looking to Terry and Anthony for confirmation before drinking them. Theo and Blaise who were the closest caught them and deposited them into their armchairs as they slowly came around.

“An animagus potion?” Susan asked amazed at what her form had been.

“Yeah, the room should register your forms in a moment.” Harry nodded to the back of their chairs as he dropped into his own. Sure enough an owl started to appear on Susan’s chair and a cat appeared on Hannah’s.

“Right, necklaces.” Harry spelled two new galleon necklaces and handed them to the girls who were slightly confused.

“Down to business. First thing, let’s work out this outer circle business.”

“I think everyone should have their own...follower. It would make things easier.” Blaise started.

“I second that. That way, they can report to us individually without having to meet up as a group.” Theo nodded.

“It might even give Dumbledore the impression that we’re not that tight and are falling apart or something.” Ginny shrugged.

“It’s actually a good idea, than you can give them tasks without them being fully aware of what the goal behind it is.” Hannah ventured her opinion quietly.

“We, don’t forget you’re one of us now. That reminds me, David can you get Professor Snape for me? It’s time you met him anyway. Blaise show him the way.”

The two of them left down the Slytherin passageway, they had discovered a passageway that led straight to Professor Snape’s office in the floor of the potions lab. This way they can go back and forth without having to stop by the Slytherin Common Room.

“Alright, while we are waiting for them Neville, Theo you want to get started on a plan? The rest of us, let’s see how much Susan and Hannah know.”

Harry took the majority of the group to the dueling chamber where they tested Susan and Hannah’s skills. They weren’t too bad. Nowhere near the level of the rest of the group, both having fallen to Luna even. But they weren’t too horrible either.

They returned to the main room and the Ravenclaws began compiling a list of spells and activities the girls should start working on during their free time. The poor girls, Harry thought, they got more than they bargained for joining the group but they seemed happy to have the extra training and were looking forward to it.

“Okay, it’s the first day. Why are you dragging me here?” Professor Snape stepped out of the Slytherin passageway scowling and looked around at the group. “Well you just keep growing don’t you? Miss Bones and Miss Abbott, welcome.” He nodded at them before dropping into an unmarked seat that only appeared whenever he was present.

“I have this idea, Remus approved it but I’d like to get your thoughts before we started.”

Neville walked over and presented the plan to Professor Snape who read through it thoughtfully. “Yes, I agree...This is a good idea. Approved... And you’re to do that for the adults as well...interesting. Who is going to be in your adult inner circle?”

“You, Remus, Sirius, Sara, Mr Malfoy and Mr Nott. And two others that I have yet to decide.”

“Good choices. Remus and I will organize a meeting with the others and we’ll discuss it.”

“Cool, just so you know. I was hoping to make Remus the leader of that group with you and Sirius as like seconds.”

“Understandable...If you’ll excuse me I’ve got some organizing to do.” Snape frowned at the thought of having to answer to Remus but Harry knew that his professor will do it. All three of them (Sirius as well) were starting to let go of their past grudges and were getting along tolerably although Harry definitely wouldn’t call them friends.

“Also, I’ve decided to take the captaincy.” Harry added as an afterthought. Professor Snape nodded and left, cloak billowing behind him leaving a magical trail behind him. Harry frowned and had Neville

make a note for them to tell Professor Snape about it on Thursday when they had potions.

Everyone gathered around to organize who was to be assigned to whom. David, without question, was to answer to Harry. Harry also assigned the two other first years, Olivia to Daphne and Tyler to Neville. Draco requested that Crabbe and Goyle be allowed entrance and Harry agreed assigning them to Draco. The group decided that because Draco had two followers, Neville and Harry should as well. They will decide later.

Fred and George were in charge of their brother, Charlie, and Lee Jordan. Terry and Anthony asked for the two Hufflepuff boys and Harry approved. Arianna called Padma who Harry agreed to after a moment's hesitation hoping beyond hope that she wasn't as empty-headed as her sister. Harry asked Hermione to take charge of Caitlyn Weasley and she agreed. Ginny claimed Sophia Jones much to Luna's disappointment.

The only ones without followers so far were Blaise, Theo, Hannah, Luna and Susan. The Costa girls had picked friends from their own house, Patricia Stimpson for Cara and Leanne Austin for Mia. Those without a follower agreed to watch those in the year above or below their own for possible followers. Arianna had recommended Megan Jones and Ginny seconded it but they weren't sure who was best to lead her. They retired not long after they had decided on what to do.

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A/N: To classify, David is officially a member of the outer circle but because he is Harry's 'brother' he is also a part of the inner circle in a way.

Chapter 29: The Boggart in the Wardrobe.

Harry had been eagerly awaiting their first DADA lesson with Remus, on Thursday morning he woke up early and was ready before Draco and Neville had even stirred. They went to breakfast where Harry was met by Olivia and Tyler with their reports. Gesturing for them to sit down Harry turned to Neville who had retrieved his quill and parchment.

“Okay guys, shoot.” Harry nodded.

“Well, Caitlyn had been spending time with Hermione Granger...” Olivia started not sure if that was what Harry had meant but at his nod she continued. “She said that Ron is always annoying Hermione because she isn’t hanging out with the rest of the Gryffindors in your year.”

“He was also annoying Caitlyn because she was always talking to Hermione or seeing Ginny and he didn’t like that for some reason.”

“Good. Did she say anything about Scabbers?”

“Well, she did ask him about it once and he said that Scabbers had run away...”

Harry’s eyes widened angrily, he took deep breaths to calm himself before retrieving the marauders’ map and checking. What they said was true. Peter Pettigrew was no longer inside Hogwarts. Sighing Harry smiled at the first-years who were sure they had done something wrong.

“Thank you! Keep watching him for me will you, and tell me when Scabbers returns.”

The two of them nodded and started eating. Damn, I should have killed him when I had the chance.

Yes, but you can’t have known then that he was the real traitor. Draco reached for a piece of toast as he ‘spoke’.

You'll get him Harry, don't worry. I will get my revenge too. Neville's eyes were darkened with anger as he attacked his bacon as though it were the Lestranges.

Thanks guys. I guess you're right. Harry sighed as he ate; they had potions that morning and couldn't afford to be hungry.

They walked down to the dungeons where Hermione was already there waiting for class to start. She looked up with a smile when she spotted them and came over to say hello. They chatted for a while about their classes and other random things.

Harry, the Weasley boy is coming.

"Sorry Hermione, Ron's on his way." Harry smiled apologetically wanting to be openly friendly with her.

Hermione nodded and retreated to her corner just as the other Gryffindors came around the corner. Harry turned to continue his conversation with the others when Ron came around the corner and attempted to land a punch on Harry only to be blown back.

"What's your problem today?" Harry asked inspecting a fingernail idly.

"You...You've split my family up is what you've done?"

"Really? This is news, last time I talked to Olivia it seems like your family is fairing as it always did." Harry smirked.

"Exactly! Olivia! Do you have any idea what you have done to that poor girl? She won't talk to me, or Percy and her parents are threatening to disown her. A Weasley in Slytherin? Can you imagine the shame?"

"That's it. You can insult me but if you insult my house or your cousin that is stepping over the line. The sorting hat put her here

because it is where she belongs and in the years to come she would do better than you could ever dream off.”

Ron growled and looked to Dean and Seamus. “Get him!”

“No way!”

“This is stupid!”

“We’ve seen him in class, he could kill us.”

Dean and Seamus backed up not wanting to take on the infamous heir of Slytherin. They have heard enough stories of how powerful he is without needing a demonstration. And after what happened the last time, the girls weren’t game enough to take him on either. That left them badly outnumbered and even they weren’t Gryffindor enough to face those odds.

“Fine! I’ll just kill him myself.”

Ron drew his wand and Harry stepped forward away from his friends laying a hand on his wand without drawing it. “You really think you could best me? It’s time you learnt a lesson.”

“You’re the one who’s going to learn a lesson today. You think you’re so great, the heir of Slytherin and all that but you’re all talk. Expelliarmus!”

Harry waved his hand and the spell flew into the wall. “Is that the best you got? In case you forgot, Weasley. I’m unarmed so there is no point disarming me.” Harry held out his hands which were empty causing his friends to snicker and the Gryffindors to hide their smiles.

“Fine! Bombarda!”

Harry smirked and withdrew his wand in a split-second to block the spell. “How about this?” Harry then proceeded to fire of various hexes and jinxes in rapid succession. Weasley managed to block the first

one before the others landed on him. "Now, let that be a lesson to you."

Harry gestured for Draco to modify Weasley's memory and then he banished the unconscious boy to the hospital wing. "Even any of you breathe a word of this, I will find out. And when I do, by Merlin, you will wish you hadn't been born."

The other Gryffindors nodded in fear and they had just begun to chat in their two separate corners when Professor Snape opened the door and let them in. They were working on a new potion today; well it was new for the majority of the class anyway. It was the Shrinking Solution and they were working in pairs; Draco and Harry, Neville and Daphne, Theo and Blaise. The Gryffindors were uneven today and so Hermione was forced to work in a threesome with the other girls.

At the end of the lesson Professor Snape decided to test their potions. As Neville was the only one with a toad Professor Snape got Neville and Daphne to test their potion on Trevor. The class watched in silence as Professor Snape dripped a couple of drops of the potion onto Trevor with a small spoon.

There was a moment of suspenseful silence, in which Trevor croaked and then with a small pop he turned into a tadpole in Neville's outstretched hand. Professor Snape smirked when the Slytherins cheered and he reached into his robes, producing a small bottle. A couple of drops later and Trevor was back to his full-grown self.

"Five points to Slytherin. Good work both of you, now clean up."

They joined the rush of students heading for the Great Hall and lunch. Harry gobbled down his food as quickly as he could, excited beyond excited for his first official lesson with his father. He questioned one of the fourth years relentlessly.

Lance Phillips was barely able to keep up with Harry's enthusiastic questioning but keep up he did, just. And he was rewarded for it. It pays to be observant which Lance was and Harry was going to use that to his advantage. And thus Harry found his second follower.

By Harry's persistence the group finished lunch much earlier than they should have and were already seated in the Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom way before lunch had ended. The Hufflepuffs arrived moments later and Harry nodded to them, it was strange how in their year level there weren't many Hufflepuffs but the other houses received more students than normal.

If it weren't for the presence of Pansy and Millicent the class would be able to be free with each other. Nonetheless they pretended otherwise as they waited for Professor Lupin to arrive. Everyone but Harry, Draco and Neville had taken their books out and they were all looking at the three Slytherins strangely.

Remus walked to his desk and placed his new briefcase on the teacher's desk smiling at them. He noted the absence of three textbooks on the Slytherin side of the room and fought laughter as he nodded his approval. "Good afternoon," he said. "We'll be having a practical lesson today so books away please."

Everyone looked curiously at each other and, in particular, at Harry as the books were put away. "Right then," Remus said when everyone appeared to be ready, "if you'd follow me."

Remus led them down the corridor where they found Peeves trying to unscrew a chandelier in one of the spare classrooms. He spotted them and was about to say something when his eyes landed on Harry and he thought better of it, floating through the ceiling. They made their way down several other corridors until they arrived outside the staff room.

Professor Lupin opened the door allowing them to pass through first. Professor Snape was already inside sitting in one of the room's many armchairs reading potion's weekly and as they walked in he looked over at them curiously making Ernie and Justin wince. Harry sighed and gestured for Neville to help them.

"Now then," Remus got them to move towards the end of the room where there was nothing but an old wardrobe that was wobbling rather violently. The Hufflepuffs looked scared as did the Slytherin girls, except for Daphne who kept her calm.

“Nothing to worry about, there’s a boggart in there that’s all.” Remus smiled at them before explaining what boggarts are. Harry listened but not very closely as he noticed Professor Snape had been on the same page for the last two minutes.

“So, the first question we must ask ourselves is, what is a boggart? Daphne?”

“It’s a shape-shifter,” she said. “It can take the shape of what it thinks frightens us the most.”

“Couldn’t have put it better myself.” Remus smiled at Daphne who smiled in return. He went into a more detailed explanation of what that meant for those who didn’t know. “That means that we have a huge advantage. Have you spotted it, Justin?”

“Um, because there are so many of us it won’t know what shape it should be?”

“Exactly.” Remus nodded.

Another short lecture later and they were practicing the spell. “Repeat after me, riddikulus!”

“Riddikulus!” The class said together.

“Good, good. Now comes the harder part. Let’s see, Ernie! Maybe you can help me here.”

Ernie stepped forward eyeing the shaking wardrobe fearfully. “Right then. What would you say frightens you the most in this world?”

It took Ernie a moment to think about this before answering, “Buckbeak.” He waited for everyone to laugh. And Pansy and Millicent almost did until Harry silenced them. If only there was a six rank Harry would throw them there. He was even considering making one for them anyway. They were completely getting on his nerve, he had to teach them a lesson and soon.

But he snapped back to the situation at hand as Draco dragged him back. The rest of the class was now moving back to give Ernie room to face the boggart. Remus nodded at him before pointing his wand at the wardrobe and the door opened. There was a squawk and Buckbeak stepped out looking at Ernie with one beady eye.

“Ri...riddikulus!”

And thus, buckbeak was split in two, both parts moving feebly, unable to stand on its own. The class laughed and the boggart stopped moving confused.

“Pansy!”

One by one the rest of the class faced the boggart, Pansy unraveled her mummy, Justin’s snake became a jack in the box and Crabbe’s spider lost his legs. The large leg-less spider rolled over to Harry who raised his wand ready to face it. Instead Remus charged forward in front of him and the Boggart changed again.

This time the form it picked not only affected Remus but everyone else in the room as well. It was Harry: dead. Professor Snape quickly stepped forward and finished off the boggart so quickly they couldn’t even see what it was. Harry moved forward and gave his dad a hug. Professor Snape sent Pansy and Millicent off before attempting to remove Ernie and Justin who refused to leave.

“It’s okay, they’re with us now.” Harry nodded to Professor Snape over Remus’ shoulder. Shrugging Professor Snape nodded and sat back down in his armchair picking up his paper and continued reading it. It took some time and some empathy manipulation on Harry’s part before Remus was calm again.

“I never thought anything could frighten me more than Moony but...” Harry shushed him and patted him on the back waiting for Remus to calm down.

Crabbe and Goyle returned from collecting their books around the same time that Remus had recovered. "Thanks guys but I'll be okay."

Harry glanced at his father suspiciously not quite convinced but finally relented. "Very well, but take care of yourself. I'll stop by tonight."

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A/N: Next chapter The beginning of the Harry/Remus vs Dumbledore battle!

Chapter 30: The Circles Meet

Harry was enjoying his classes more than he ever had in the past, except of course History of Magic which was as boring as always. He didn't even bother taking notes in those classes anymore as most of what Professor Binns taught them was false. Instead he used them to finish his homework for his other subjects or to do some private studying of his own.

His new favorite class was easily DADA although Arithmancy was a close second. Arithmancy was now even better as everyone was a part of the group. The other two Ravenclaws were Padma and Megan and so everyone was able to be friendly with each other. Another class that Harry was really starting to enjoy was Ancient Runes although he was frustrated at the slow pace the professor was going at.

Remus was teaching them about various dark creatures and everyone agreed that he was the best DADA teacher that they have had so far. This of course annoyed Professor Dumbledore who watched as all the students who should have hated him adored Remus. Especially the Slytherins who don't want to get on Harry's bad side.

Dumbledore had even tried leaking the fact that Remus was a werewolf to discredit him. What he hadn't counted on though was Harry's popularity in the school and his control over the Slytherin house.

Harry, we have a problem.

Harry looked up from his dinner to see Daphne taking a seat beside David who had a permanent seat opposite Harry.

What's the matter?

Not sure how to tell you this but the news that Remus is a werewolf is spreading around the school.

What? Harry's eyes snapped with fury. Do you know who leaked it?

We believe it was Dumbledore but don't have the actual proof. Blaise added apologetically from his seat next to Draco.

Oh that's it! Harry was furious and had major plans for a payback campaign. Now that the twins were done with pranking Charlie and had forgiven him Harry could get them to work on Dumbledore. Of course Dumbledore would be harder but Harry and Luna had enough access to the school to overrule him.

The twins were amazing, especially with the help of their girlfriends, the four of them were a force to be reckoned with and had even began creating their amazing prank products. If they had Theo and Blaise and Daphne to help them there was nothing they couldn't do. The seven of them could rule the world if they wanted to Harry thought with a smirk.

"Flint! House meeting tonight eight o'clock. Make sure the entire house is there."

Flint nodded not wanting to question Harry when he was so obviously angry but instead he proceeded to make his way up and down the table passing on the news. Harry gestured for Lance to move into the seat on the other side of David.

"Meeting at seven, the old ballroom."

Harry repeated the message via his necklace and added, tell your followers as well. It's time we all met up.

Harry's friends all proceeded to tell their followers the news and Harry was glad that there was no quidditch practice on that night for any of the houses. There were a good number of quidditch players both in the inner circle as well as the outer circle. Harry spotted his friends moving between house tables as they passed the message on to their followers.

They finished their dinner quickly and headed for an old ballroom where they all took their seats. Fred and George had stumbled

across it by accident a couple of weeks ago when they were looking for a secure place to test their inventions. It was only accessible through a series of secret passageways that the group had learned and remembered.

Blaise was, unsurprisingly the last to arrive, he had an appetite rivaling that of Ronald Weasley, but his table manners were better by far. He was a 'Zabini' after all.

"Right, now that we are all here." Harry mock glared at Blaise making everyone laugh. "How many of you have heard these rumors of Remus' condition?"

Harry nodded when Blaise and Daphne raised their hands. Ernie and Justin also reluctantly raised their hands.

"We heard it at dinner."

"Some of the fifth years were talking about it."

Harry sighed, "Okay, Dumbledore's going to try and use this to discredit Remus if he wasn't the one who began it in the beginning. He has also forgotten the new laws that allow Remus to work wherever he wishes."

"Relax Harry; we'll get back at him." Fred held up a hand.

"Yeah, Weasley pranking style." George nodded with a grin.

"Thanks guys, now let's get down to it. We Slytherins have a meeting to get to."

"Eh...Harry, we have a problem." Ginny looked around the room taking note of the outer circle members who were either perched on the arm of their leader's armchair or sitting in their own chair that they had conjured. The room hadn't been used in so long that it didn't really cater for so many people. "We don't exactly know everyone here."

“Oh yes, Ginny, good point. Here’s what we’ll do. We’ll go around the room and everyone will stand up and introduce themselves and say something interesting about themselves. I’ll start.” Harry stood. “I’m Harry Potter, third year Slytherin, which you all probably already know. I have a pet runespoor.” Harry smirked as he sat down and gestured for David to go next.

“I’m David Lupin, first year Slytherin. I didn’t meet my dad till term started.” David nodded to the room not betraying the nervousness he felt. Harry smiled; his mother had trained him well. They then went around the room and everyone stood to say their piece. Most of which had people laughing.

“Draco Malfoy, third year Slytherin. I actually support the French quidditch team.”

“Vincent Crabbe, third year Slytherin. I like muggle music.”

“Gregory Goyle, third year Slytherin as well. I like reading.”

“Padma Patil, third year Ravenclaw. Well, Parvati and I aren’t actually identical twins. We’re fraternal twins.”

“Arianna Anderson, third year Ravenclaw. I like quidditch more than reading.”

“Ginny Weasley, second year Ravenclaw. I can count the number of dresses I own, on one hand.”

“Sophia Jones, second year Ravenclaw. I almost turned down Hogwarts to go to muggle high school with my brother.”

“Caitlyn Weasley, first year Gryffindor. Um, my favorite professor is Professor Snape.”

“Hermione Granger, third year Gryffindor. I spend more money on books in a month than I do on clothes in a year.”

“Olivia Weasley, first year Slytherin. I’m the first Slytherin Weasley ever.”

“Daphne Greengrass, third year Slytherin. I’m the first female Greengrass to be born with magical powers.”

“Blaise Zabini, third year Slytherin. I’ve never worn muggle clothes in my life.”

“Matthew Harper, second year Slytherin. I was supposed to be a Gryffindor.”

“Brian Steward, fourth year Slytherin. I prefer muggle skateboarding to quidditch.”

“Theodore Nott, third year Slytherin. I like muggle poetry.”

“Luna Lovegood, second year Ravenclaw. Well, I’m the heir of Ravenclaw.”

“Lucy Spencer, first year Ravenclaw. I was almost sent to Beauxbatons.”

“Megan Jones, third year Ravenclaw. Um...I hope to become a lawyer one day.”

“Susan Bones, third year Hufflepuff. I was raised by my aunt, just like Harry.”

“Hannah Abbott, third year Hufflepuff. I hope to become a healer one day.”

“Tracy Harris, second year Hufflepuff. I already had plans to become a muggle doctor when my letter came.”

“Anthony Goldstein, third year Ravenclaw. I actually prefer living in the muggle world.”

“Ernie Macmillian, third year Hufflepuff. I have a fear of birds.”

“Justin Finch Fletchley, third year Hufflepuff. I had been accepted into Eton before Hogwarts.”

“Terry Boot, third year Ravenclaw. I’m scared of snakes.”

“Patricia Stimpson, fifth year Hufflepuff. I had not read a single book until I was accepted into Hogwarts.”

“Cara Costa.”

“Mia Costa.”

“Fifth year Hufflepuff.”

"And fifth year Gryffindor."

“Italy’s our real home.”

“Even as much as we love England.”

“Leanne Austin, fourth year Gryffindor. I don’t like chocolate...”

“Fred Weasley.”

“George Weasley.”

“Fifth year Gryffindors.”

“Pranking is not just a hobby to us.”

“It’s our way of life.”

“ Charlie Weasley. Care of Magical Creatures Professor. I understand Dragons better then I understand people sometimes.”

“Lee Jordan, fifth year Gryffindor. I wish to be a radio DJ after Hogwarts.”

“Ryan Yaxely, second year Slytherin. I’ve never met my father.”

“Neville Longbottom, third year Slytherin. I was dropped out of the attic window when I didn’t show signs of being magical.”

“Tyler Peterson, first year Slytherin. The first time I did magic I almost burned the house down.”

“Great, now that we all know each other let’s get down to business. Blaise, Daphne and Theo planning. Fred, George, Mia and Cara weapons. Draco, Arianna potions. Anthony, Hermione and Terry spells. Neville, Hannah greenhouse. Susan and Ginny, I’m going to need you guys to work on the other students. Luna, it’s time for you to reveal yourself I think, we need you to help convince the Ravenclaws. Get them on our side.” Luna nodded.

“What about us?” Leanne asked.

“Oh, yes the outer circle will be helping their leaders unless I need you. Now let’s split up and see to our tasks.”

Draco, Padma and Arianna headed for the main library and compiled a list of potions they might need. Crabbe and Goyle were given the task of fetching books from either the shelves or Draco’s trunk, which had the most complete potions library falling just short of Professor Snape’s. Anthony, Hermione and Terry also moved into the library with their three followers and were soon surrounded by a big pile of books on various subjects. Neville and Hannah were in the greenhouse working on various ingredients whilst their followers were, under the direction of Ryan, researching in the library.

Fred, George, Mia and Cara remained in the ballroom where they started plotting and inventing. Their followers were given the tasks of helping or running errands. The planning crew was sitting in Slytherin’s old sitting room, which had been cleaned out, with various bits of parchments around them. Susan and Ginny took another old

sitting room; this time Ravenclaw's which had likewise been renovated, planning the best way to approach the situation with help from Sophie and Megan.

Harry in the meantime had sent Lance to do some surveillance, not just on Dumbledore but on the other professors as well. With Lance gone Harry and David made their way over to visit their father.

"MOONY!"

Remus looked up as the two Slytherin boys walked into the room, "Hey boys, what's up?"

"Um...we got to talk." Harry and David took their seats.

"You're here to talk about the leakage aren't you?" Remus sighed and set down his quill knowing that this could take a while.

"I guess you already know about it."

"Yeah Severus told me at dinner. He heard some of his Gryffindors talking about it outside his classroom. We've called together the adult inner circle...we really do need a name don't we? I think the plan is to politically and financially ruin Dumbledore whilst you guys do whatever you do here."

"Okay then...I guess you didn't really need me. I'm assigning David to you. I think the twins can do without Charlie as well. He's not really cut out for their tasks..."

"Do I want to know what their tasks are?" Remus interrupted with a smile.

"Er...not really...Anyways, anything you need just ask. You can send David to me. Or just drop by the common room." Harry figured the two of them haven't spent enough time together since they found out about their relationship.

“You’re still going to be there tonight right? You didn’t forget did you? It’s the full moon tonight, that’s why everyone’s talking about it.”

“Oh shoot! Okay, I’ll be there. Hey, do you think David...?”

“No, he might have a strong alignment with the wolf but aside from that he won’t become...me.”

“Okay cool. So it’ll just be the two of us then. Unless you think we need...”

“Well yes, prongs was able to manage me on his own but it took a lot out of him and he’s never done it for a whole night.”

“Okay, I’ll get Neville to come with us. That should be enough I think. We’ll see you soon. We’ve got ourselves a meeting to get to. I’ll meet you in the clearing at ten? Is that too late?”

“No, it’s still close to summer. The moon won’t be up until later.”

“Good. I’ll see you there.”

Harry and David left for the Slytherin Common Room leaving their father to get ready. They met up with Lance, Blaise, Matthew, Theo and Brian who were also on their way to the Slytherin common room. Talking softly they made their way to the common room.

The Slytherin Common Room was packed as everyone was there waiting for Harry. Walking in Harry nodded, “Alright, let’s get down to business. I’ve got another appointment tonight. Raise your hand if you’ve heard about my guardian’s condition.”

About half the room raised their hands, from all year levels. Even four of the six prefects had raised their hands. Harry sighed, “Opinions!”

“Well...I overheard some of the Hufflepuffs talking about it...” Flint hesitated. He was the most senior after Harry, Draco and Neville. But the seventh year was hesitant to talk about this topic. When Harry nodded for him to continue though he knew he had no choice. “I

honestly...well, it's none of my business. Professor Lupin is the best DADA teacher we've ever had. And well, even though he may be a dark creature...as long as it doesn't affect his teaching I don't mind...too much." Flint knew he was going to be in trouble, but he'd rather be in trouble for his opinions than lying.

Harry nodded and looked to Draco who confirmed Flint had told the truth. "Anyone else have anything to say?"

Flint breathed a sigh of relief as most of the room shook their heads although there were a few who were hesitant. But Harry didn't hold it against them, they had all been brought up in fear of werewolves and asking them to change was going to take time. "Great! We are agreed then. Now what I'm telling you does not go beyond these walls. Draco here has been brewing the wolfsbane potion for Professor Lupin. So you have nothing to fear. I tell this to let you know that he has the access, if I hear any other mention of it I will find the one responsible and it won't be pretty. Is that understood?"

Everyone shook their head, fear shining in their eyes. Whilst most of the school did not know how powerful the famous Harry Potter was the entire Slytherin house has seen enough displays of his powers to fear him. None of them, save Pansy and Millicent, were stupid enough to argue with him.

"Good, now I have assignments to hand out. I want everyone to help convince the other students that Remus is safe. Flint, coordinating, I'll need you to talk to the others and report back to me weekly with whatever news they have." Flint nodded accepting his task which he would have done anyway; it was his duty as seventh-year prefect to be aware of everything that was happening in the house.

Harry handed out various other assignments, assigning some students to help Anthony, Hermione and Terry with the spells or Draco and Arianna with potions and Hannah and Neville with collecting ingredients. Lastly he got to the one assignment he was going to enjoy watching. "Pansy, Millicent you will be helping Lance at whatever he wants you to do." Harry smirked at the two girls nodded eyeing the good-looking Lance with obvious happiness. They of

course had no idea what Lance and Harry had in stall for them. It was time for them to learn what it means to go against their leader.

After checking one last time to make sure everyone knew what their tasks were Harry and Neville left to meet up with Remus. When he arrived they transformed at once, they had as much fun as they did last month especially Neville who found Remus in werewolf form interesting as well the fact that Harry could speak to both of them. They eventually crawled into bed just before dawn. It was easier to handle Remus this time as Professor Snape had been feeding him the wolfsbane potion.

Draco had a hard time forcing Harry and Neville to wake up the next morning but eventually he did. Draco fed them some pepper-up potions before seeing to their injuries. Whilst no one was as good as Arianna or the Costa twins at healing but the others had learned enough to heal any basic cuts and bruises. When they were done and had finished getting ready for the day all three of them joined the others in the common room before heading over to Remus' quarters to see how he was doing.

“Hey Moony? “

Harry peeked around the door to Remus' bedroom to find Remus was sprawled out on the bed still fast asleep. Smirking slightly Harry gave a sharp whistle and laughed as his guardian jumped. Remus landed on the floor groaning.

“Come on! Moony, you have a class to teach!”

Remus mumbled out some incoherent answer that made Harry shake his head. “Okay guys, divide and conquer.”

Draco opened his book bag and took out his potions case. Daphne ran over to Remus and started healing him whilst Draco picked out the potions that Remus would need. Harry just smiled as he watched the others, he was so lucky to have so many good friends with him.

It took them nearly half an hour but finally Remus was up and ready for the day. It took him a little longer to recover from the full night of running around than it used to. He wasn't as young as he once was. Nonetheless he finally made it out of bed.

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A/N: Oh and I'm sorry to say that updating is going to be scattered throughout the next month. Sorry! But I will try my best to at least get one or two chapters up soon before the exam madness sets in.

Chapter 31: The Heirs Strike Back.

The students and their DADA professor made their way down to the Great Hall. They chatted happily trying to pry their next lesson from Remus' lips. The marauder was smirking fondly as he remained silent on the topic. The Great Hall fell silent when they spotted Remus walking in behind the Slytherins.

They watched him curiously at first but when Remus smiled and bowed they all went back to their breakfasts muttering softly amongst themselves. Harry took his seat but kept an eye on Remus who took a seat in between Charlie and Professor Snape. Keeping up with their charade Professor Snape smirked and muttered some snappy comment out of the corner of his mouth. Remus grimaced and whispered something back that caused Professor Snape's smirk to turn into a grimace.

Harry turned back to his breakfast, it was pancakes that morning and Harry piled his plate high with them and ate as he talked with the other Slytherins about their tasks. He was half-way through it when he was interrupted.

"Hey Potter!"

Looking up Harry spotted a sixth year Hufflepuff heading for him. Curious Harry raised an eyebrow as he stood; he concentrated on the Hufflepuff girls as he put his question out to them.

Who is that?

That's Cedric Diggory, he's the new Hufflepuff quidditch captain and our sixth year prefect. Susan answered him.

Thanks.

"Diggory. What can I do for you?"

"A private word." Diggory stopped a foot or two from the table and gave Harry a small bow which made the third-years snicker slightly.

Harry nodded and the two of them left the Hall. Harry led Cedric through one of the many secret passages Irene had shown him and into Slytherin's old sitting room, Harry dropped into his favorite armchair and gestured for Cedric to do the same.

"So, what did you wish to talk about?"

Cedric eyed the room critically noting the color scheme and likewise fell into the other armchair. "I've been hearing some rumors around and was hoping you could shed some light on them."

Harry smirked and raised his eyebrow again, "Really? Which rumors are you referring to and why should I tell you?"

"Er...well, I heard some of the Slytherins in my year talking about you being the heir and starting a war against Dumbledore or something. I'm not sure what it was exactly but it's got me curious. And you could tell me or not as you wish but I think I might be able to help you out." Cedric was slightly nervous as he waited for the infamous Evans temper to flare.

"Ah, I see, I shall have to degrade whoever it was. They should know better to talk about it in public. But..." Harry paused as he started another conversation with Irene.

Hey Irene, Diggory wouldn't happen to be the Hufflepuff heir would he?

Harry heard a sigh in his mind before Irene replied. You know I'm not supposed to say anything but yes, he is the one you've been looking for.

Thank you.

"Right, since Irene vouches for you I'll tell you on one condition. If you decide to join me you'll be sworn to secrecy and no one outside of my circle can know about any of it. And if you don't I will wipe this conversation from your mind."

Cedric hesitated slightly for a moment but agreed with a nod. "Okay."

Draco, can you come down. We're in Slytherin's old sitting room. I need your help.

I'm on my way.

Harry then proceeded to tell Cedric everything he could think of and almost laughed at the shock on the older boy's face. It was one thing to hear rumors but to have them confirmed? Cedric looked ready to faint from the sheer overload of information. Harry thought, maybe he should have taken it a bit slower.

"Okay...um...oh, one more thing. The rumors of Professor Lupin being a werewolf...?"

"True."

"Oh, I thought Jeremy was just being...wow, so last night he really...he has wolfsbane right? I mean the whole school knows that he and Professor Snape... so I don't think he'll have any help there."

"Again true, Draco brews the wolfsbane for him."

"Talking about me?" Draco walked into the room smirking but stopped short when he found himself confronted with a wand. Cedric obviously was pretty quick on the draw.

"It's okay Cedric. He's one of mine. I asked him here to help me once you decide."

"Right, sorry."

"No it's good. It means you're careful. Oh that's another thing I'm not sure if you've met Irene yet."

Of course he hasn't. He's not even aware of his heritage.

Oh boy this could take some explaining.

Harry frowned as he checked his watch, they only had fifteen minutes till the first class of the day started.

“Okay, here’s the short version. Hogwarts was infused with an elf when it was created. That same elf is tied to all the heirs that come to Hogwarts. Her name is Irene and she tells me that you are one of us.”

“Me? Wait you said one of us? Who are the other two?”

“One, I’m the heir of both Gryffindor and Slytherin. Luna Lovegood is the Ravenclaw heir and you are the Hufflepuff heir.”

Cedric shook his head obviously not believing Harry on this front. Harry and Draco snickered out loud when Cedric jumped as though he had been stung. It took a minute or so but Cedric finally believed that he was an heir of Hogwarts.

“So, have you decided? I don’t wish to push you but classes start in ten minutes so we need an answer.”

The Hufflepuff bit his lip softly a couple of times before nodding. “I’ll join you, but I don’t want to be the only Hufflepuff there. Do you think my best friend can join us?”

Harry checked Cedric’s sincerity with Draco first before he spoke. Receiving a nod Harry turned to Cedric again, “Okay, what’s his name?”

“Nathaniel Sanderson.”

Not recognizing the name Harry hesitated, “I think he can be your outer circle follower. But let me watch him first, I’m not sure if he’s going to be a good part of our group or not. Either way you won’t be the only Hufflepuff . There are a few of yours with us.”

“Really? So you do have people from all houses in your group?”

“Yep, and we will discuss more later, but we’ve got Potions and you know how Professor Snape is about punctuality. Ever been exploring around the unused classroom of the ground floor?” Cedric shook his head and Harry continued. “Well, there is a portrait of the founders there. The password’s connect four. If you can’t find it there is an entrance in your common room, behind either a portrait or a statue of your ancestor.”

“Right, I’ll be there after dinner?”

“Before or after. At least one of us will be there. We’re working on a project at the moment so we’ll be there.”

“Okay, see you then...um how do I get out?”

“Ask Irene, she’ll show you shortcuts and secret passageways. She’s a useful friend.”

Harry smirked and with a final nod he departed with Draco transforming into their animagus selves to get through the secret passageways faster. Luckily Professor Snape was running late today and they reached the classroom a mere minute before he did.

“Inside.”

Professor Snape wasn’t in a good mood today which made their lesson all the more interesting as they watched the Gryffindors facing the full force of his wrath. The day continued slowly for Harry who couldn’t wait until classes were over and he could get back to planning Dumbledore’s ruin. Even as distracted as he was Harry still managed to earn Slytherin another sixty points that day.

So far the house cup has been rather balanced although Slytherin and Ravenclaw were still the ones in the lead the other houses weren’t that far behind. Harry dropped into his armchair in the common room directly after his last class, Ancient Runes. As much as he loved the subject he couldn’t wait to get out of there, Professor Babbling was covering things he had already learned over the summer and won’t let him move forward.

Harry closed his eyes and soaked up the warmth of the fire that he had sub-consciously lit with a small sigh of happiness. The first thing he had noticed when he had entered the room was the addition of the extra armchair that bore Hufflepuff's mark on it. Now he opened his books to get started on his Charms homework when a voice interrupted him.

"Harry! We've got a problem."

Looking up Harry found his newest recruit nervously facing nine wands. The others have yet to arrive from their different classes. Harry sighed as he stood and moved forward. He clasped Cedric on the shoulder and held out a hand.

"It's okay guys, he's one of us now. Cedric I want you to meet a part of the group..."

"...part?..." Cedric looked around as the others put their wands away; he obviously hadn't anticipated such a large group.

Harry smirked and shrugged, "Yeah, Draco you already know. Neville Longbottom, Blaise Zabini, Theodore Nott, Daphne Greengrass, Arianna Anderson, Terry Boot, Anthony Goldstein, Ginny Weasley and Luna Lovegood." Harry pointed out each person who nodded or waved as they were introduced. "Everyone, this is Cedric Diggory the last heir."

They all nodded and returned to their activities as Harry showed Cedric around finally coming back to the common room as the others arrived. He had given Cedric his potion and coin and was unsurprised to see that Cedric was a Badger. Cedric settled into his armchair as he watched members from all four houses come together and chat like they were best friends. Harry whistled to get everyone's attention.

"Okay, we have a new member. Cedric meet Hermione Granger, Fred and George Weasley, Mia and Cara Costa, Susan Bones and Hannah Abbott. Guys, Cedric Diggory."

With introductions over Harry went about filling Cedric in on everything else he had missed out that morning. When Harry was done overloading Cedric's head with even more information he put Cedric to the test and was amazed when Cedric was able to last five minutes in a duel before Harry was able to dispatch him. He was definitely the heir of Hufflepuff, he was powerful, more so than Luna. But of course age and experience had a hand in that as well.

"At the moment we are trying to get even with Dumbledore for the whole Remus being a werewolf thing. I think you've had more than enough information for one day. So, I'll be assigning you the same task as Luna. Reveal yourself to your house; get them under your control and hopefully on Remus' side." Harry smiled.

"Yeah, I can do that." Cedric nodded trying to look confident.

"Great! Well it is dinnertime so let's get going before Blaise eats everything."

"Hey I resent that!" Blaise called from the Ravenclaw passageway as he exited with his arms full of books and parchments.

"Oh really? And who was it that ate an entire plate of chicken wing the other day?"

"Well...I'll have you know I had help..."

Laughing the group headed off for dinner and parted ways in the entrance hall. Things passed swiftly for another couple of weeks as they organized their first major pranks. They now went about adding the Hufflepuff element to their 'message'. It had been about a week since they had first started their planning that Harry send two of the outer followers into Hogsmeade with his invisibility cloak and some galleons for more supplies.

Finally it was time for their first prank, dinner that night started out as normally as it always did. It struck seven when, as several students stood to leave, fireworks went off from the head table, specifically from the headmaster's plate and under his seat. The Great Hall was

filled with bright colorful lights as the entire student body laughed. There were only a couple who remained silent like Percy Weasley and some Ravenclaw girl.

This went on for another fifteen minutes during which the professors, unsuccessfully attempted to vanquish the fireworks. Every time a professor attempted to vanquish a firework it would merely double in both size and quantity. The only professors not moving were Remus, Charlie and Professor Snape who were too busy fighting laughter to draw their wands.

When the lights and smoke cleared everyone fell silent as they witnessed their headmaster stuck to his chair covered in stripes, namely the four house colors. There was a banner of magical smoke proudly displaying the crest of Hogwarts right above the Headmaster. Magical writing started appearing above that, large and clear for the entire school to read.

This is what happens when you mess with the heirs of Hogwarts. Beware, this is just the beginning, you will pay!

Not a single sound was made as everyone read the words above Dumbledore's head. Dumbledore himself was unable to move or speak as he witnessed the shock on everyone's faces. They were looking between Harry and Dumbledore confused. Some were also sneaking glances up at Remus, who feigned shock as he too looked at the writing.

Even the professors were silent with confusion. Professor Snape and Charlie also faked their confusion so as to not give themselves away. Professor McGonagall was looking particularly upset as she looked to her mentor in disappointment. Having access to the school records Professor McGonagall knew who the heirs were and was shocked that Professor Dumbledore had tried to harm any of them.

Professor McGonagall stood and addressed the room, "Whoever is responsible for this, we will catch you and you will be in trouble. That said could we please have the headmaster back soon." Internally she thought; I need to talk to Remus about this. She knew the only ones

who could have pulled off a prank like this were the twins, the marauders or Potter himself.

No one made a move as they waited for the headmaster to unfreeze which he did about ten minutes of silence later. There was a thunderous lion roar followed by a loud hissing noise, next a badger's growl and then an eagle's call. As the eagle's yell faded Professor Dumbledore finally managed to stand up started yelling at the hall silently. He still hadn't recovered his voice though and would not do so until the following morning. Those in Harry's group who had studied Gaelic were shocked at some of the words he was mouthing.

Realizing that no one could understand him Dumbledore stormed out of the Great Hall furious. A few seconds later the chatter began at the Ravenclaw table and spread. Soon the entire hall was whispering about the incident as they left in packs. Who were the heirs of Hogwarts? What had Dumbledore done to them? What is going to happen next? The whole school wanted to know. Harry smirked to himself as Draco, Neville and himself headed for a secret passageway; it had begun.

Chapter 32: A Slytherin or Gryffindor or Both?

Harry and the other Slytherins were making their way through the crowd to the secret passageway down the hall that would lead them to their common room. They had finally cleared the crowd only to face another obstacle in their way. Hermione had obviously tried to make her to the common room as well but was now faced with the Gryffindor Trio. Or she found herself facing Ron Weasley in particular whilst his side-kicks stood nearby not wanting to take a part in this.

Ron was pushing her and yelling loudly, "Where are you going? Why don't you ever tell any of us anything? Think you're too good for Gryffindor don't you? Maybe you should just ask to be resorted so you can join those friends of yours in Ravenclaw where you belong."

"What is going on here?" Harry asked in a commanding tone that had even his friends shocked.

"We...I...she...you..." The Gryffindor quivered with fear even as kept a tight grip on Hermione's arm.

"Well, it's nice to know you have been taught your pronouns. But I'm sure I mentioned something about bullying others."

"This isn't any of your business, Potter. Now go back to your little snake pit and leave Gryffindor business to Gryffindors." Weasley seemed to have recovered some of his infamous Gryffindor bravery.

"And I shall, so are you going to let go of her or do we have to make you?" Harry smirked. He thought, seeing as Luna and Cedric were revealing themselves he may as well do the same. The others were also smirking as they realized what he was doing.

"You? A Gryffindor don't make me laugh Potter. You are obviously a snake, which is why you can talk to them."

"Yes that's true. But you didn't count on this did you." Harry gave the fierce roar of an angry lion.

Dean and Seamus although shocked immediately knelt down a little fearfully in front of Harry. "Forgive us for everything we've done."

"We didn't realize who you are."

"From now on you shall have our loyalty."

Harry nodded satisfied as he gestured for them to stand. "Very well, you are forgiven. If you are lucky I might give you a spot in my ranks. Now you may go." He waved a hand dismissing the two Gryffindors who bowed one last time before scampering off.

Noticing that Ronald had yet to let go of Hermione's arm Harry frowned unhappily, "Last chance. Let her go before I make you."

"You're just a fake; there is no way you can make me..." Ronald scowled not liking the idea that he might have to answer to Potter.

"Relashio!" Harry whipped his wand out quickly and fired the spell. Ronald cursed and let go quickly. As he did so Daphne ran forward and drew Hermione behind the Slytherin boys as she tended to the Gryffindor's arm.

"You disgust me Weasley. You say you're all about Gryffindor pride and then you go and hurt one of my own. This has got to stop." Harry turned to his friends and asked, "Blaise, Theo, Daphne can you guys take care of Hermione. We'll be right along."

Once the four of them have left Harry turned to Ron with an almost evil smile that made Weasley cringe. "Let's finish this once and for all. Wizards duel, no contact, right now. Nothing illegal, no dark arts spells and nothing that causes permanent injury. First one to retrieve the other's wand wins. You win, I'll leave you alone. I win; you will stop your your bullying."

Weasley quickly agreed with a nod and retrieved his wand. Harry raised his wand and bowed watching as Ronald did the same.

“Alright, begin on three. One...two...three!” Draco dropped his arm and Harry fired off the first spell, “Langlock!”

Harry grinned as he watched Weasley try to speak an incantation with his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. Unlike the others in their year Ron had yet to learn how to cast spells non-verbally which is what made Professor Snape’s spell so useful in this situation.

“Rictusempra!” Harry just smirked as he watched Weasley roll around on the floor laughing. He waited to see what Weasley would do next and smirked when he found himself facing a leg-locker hex.

Harry quickly blocked it and yawned, “Really Weasley some imagination please. Any first-year can cast that.” Well that wasn’t exactly true but Harry felt like down-grading the boy just a little. Harry fired off a couple of low-level punching hexes before disarming the beaten boy.

“Not that this hasn’t been fun but I have things to do, do remember our deal Weasley. I hope we don’t have to do this again.”

Before they left Harry fired off one last curse, this one forbid Weasley from speaking of what had just happened although the memories will still be there. Then the Slytherin Trio left for their common room, Harry had barely settled down to his homework when he was interrupted yet again.

Harry, you have to see this.

Irene! I’ve got homework due tomorrow and I still haven’t finished proofing it.

This is much more important I assure you.

Oh okay, what is it?

Watch.

Harry was then hit with a vision of Remus' office and he raised an eyebrow as he settled onto the couch to watch the scene progress. According to the clock on the wall this was happening at the same time. Harry looked at his father marking essays and wondered what was so important about this when a knock on the door made Harry's ethereal self jump.

"Come in!"

Remus didn't look up from his essays as he granted permission to who he assumed to be one of his students. But he was wrong; the person on the other side of the door turned out to be an upset and stressed Professor McGonagall. "Remus."

Now Remus looked up and paused in shock at seeing his old head of house standing in the doorway looking like she was about to breakdown. "Minerva. Please come in. I'll make some tea." Remus led McGonagall to a seat in front of his desk as he waved his wand at the kettle.

"Thank you. I don't want to bother you but there are some things that I need your help with."

"Whatever I can do, just ask." Remus was a little nervous as to what she needed help with. Harry smiled at the way his dad worded his offer, Remus should have been a Slytherin.

"Answer my questions truthfully."

Remus frowned, "I will answer what I can but understand there are some things I cannot talk about."

"Very well, that prank tonight. Who was responsible?"

Remus bit his lip as he thought of an answer, whilst he guessed it was the Weasley and the Costas he didn't know for sure which one of the twins were responsible. "I suspect the twins, both Weasley and Costa but I have no proof nor do I know for sure."

“I thought as much myself, but why?”

“That I can’t say, maybe its best you ask them yourself.”

“I will. What I really want to know though is what Albus did to Potter that his friends would go to such lengths to get revenge for him.”

Remus paused surprised that she knew so much. Harry too was shocked that McGonagall knew he was the heir and that he was friends with the Weasleys. “I...how did you know?”

“One I have access to school records and I know that the Potters are the descendents of Gryffindor. As to the friendship between the twins and Potter, I was once in the same situation. I had friends in Slytherin and we tried to hide it from the rest of the school in much the same manner that Potter and the twins did. They do a good job of it but I can tell.”

“Right...” Remus was at a lost as to how to proceed. “Will you excuse me for a second?” Harry watched as Remus went to retrieve his mirror and call Harry. Irene let Harry go and he returned to his own body in time to feel his mirror go off. Harry smiled as he retrieved his mirror.

“Hey Remus, problem with McGonagall?”

“How did you know?”

“I’m the heir, Irene tells me everything.”

“Of course, I really could do with your help down here! I don’t know what to say, she knows too much.”

“I know, I know. I’ll be there as soon as I can. Just stall her till then.”

“Okay I’ll try but hurry.”

Dropping his mirror back into his pocket Harry ran for the entrance ignoring the curious glances his friends were giving him, as soon as he had cleared the room he transformed mid-step and fell to the floor in snake form. He slithered across the floor and through various secret passageways until he reached Remus' door a mere two minutes later. Slightly out of breath Harry transformed back into himself and knocked as he smoothed down his robes.

"Come in!" Harry smirked as he opened the door and entered his dad's office. The relief on Remus' face was so obvious that Harry had to fight the urge to laugh.

"Hey Moony. You needed help explaining things?"

Professor McGonagall looked at Harry in nervous surprise. "How did you...get here...so fast?"

Harry shrugged with a smile as he dropped onto the couch in the same position he was in before. "I have my ways, I'm the heir of Hogwarts here and there aren't any secrets that the school will hide from me."

"By secrets you mean..." The Gryffindor Head of House was slowly starting to wrap her mind around the situation.

"Information, enchantments, passageways, rooms...basically everything within these walls is accessible to me, more or less anyway." Harry smirked.

Remus returned from the other side of the room with three cups of tea and handed one to Harry before handing another to McGonagall and then settling back into his chair with the third cup.

"So, what did you want to know that Remus couldn't explain to you?" Harry took a sip of the tea and sighed, he recognized the taste. The Potter elves have been cultivating tea from the grounds at Potter Manor for centuries and this was part of the newest batch.

“Firstly it was the twin quartet who pulled that prank tonight wasn’t it?” McGonagall too sipped her tea and relaxed slightly.

“That I shall not say, but if you wish to assign blame for the prank it is rightfully mine.”

“I see, I will not be punishing those responsible but I do wish to know. I also would like to know the reasons behind such a prank.”

“Aha, well if you agree not to punish then yes I asked the Weasley and Costa twins to prank the headmaster for me. They may or may not have had help but they were the ones who implemented the prank. As to the reasons behind the prank...tell me, have you listened to the Hogwarts rumor mill lately?”

“Not for a while, I’ll admit.”

“So you are not aware of the trial that took place at the beginning of the summer?”

“Well...I do recall something actually but I don’t really know the specifics.”

“Professor Dumbledore was challenging my Aunt’s right to be my guardian as well as Remus’ right to act as my regent.”

“That doesn’t make sense; he was the one who...” McGonagall was looking more confused than before.

“Put me there I know. Which is what makes everything so...wrong. I personally believe the reason the headmaster was so eager to become my guardian was to stop me from going down the ‘dark’ path.” Harry held up fingers to quote the word dark. “He expected me to be sorted into Gryffindor or possibly Ravenclaw as I’m sure you did as well.”

Professor McGonagall nodded, she was riveted with Harry's story, she was beginning to see a side to her mentor she had never seen before.

"Well I think he wanted to become my guardian so that he could direct me back in the 'light' direction. Luckily Remus won and is now my full guardian. Unhappy with that Professor Dumbledore then sought to discredit Remus as a professor by spreading the news that Remus is in fact a werewolf."

"Oh so that's what all the whispering was about this morning." McGonagall nodded in understanding although not quite happy with what she was hearing.

"Yes and so we decided to get back at him. He thinks he can control the lives of others when they aren't his to control. It's not right and it's time he learned that. Everyone has the right to choose their own path and shouldn't be classified as light or dark just because of their house or their parents."

"That's very...mature and...wise. I believe I understand at last."

Harry nodded with a smile, "So would you like to be a part of it?"

"I..." Professor McGonagall was silent for a full five minutes as she thought over everything that has happened in her life. Dumbledore continuously told her that Voldemort will return one day and yet he was doing nothing to prepare the wizarding world for it. Just the headmaster of Hogwarts he may be but he was the most influential wizard in the wizarding world before Harry Potter came along.

"Very well, Mr Potter. I shall swear myself to your cause." She was finally seeing things as they are and agreed that the time had come to do something about it.

Harry raised an eyebrow as he searched her for signs of deceit. Whilst his way of doing it wasn't as accurate or as effective as Draco Harry could sense the changes in emotions and a person's magical levels and they told him whether a person was nervous or not.

Finally he was satisfied, "Great! Remus, she's yours. Tell her everything and all that. I've still got my Charms homework to finish."

"Sure, I thought you finished your Charms essay two days ago." Remus asked in confusion.

"Yes, but I still have to go over it. I'll see you both later."

Harry nodded once more before he took his leave. He transformed outside the door and returned to his common room to finish his homework. He had just finished his weekly homework when Fred and George contacted him.

Harry!

Why didn't you tell us you were going to reveal yourself?

Yeah, we were totally unprepared.

Percy's having a fit and is yelling at Finnegan and Thomas.

He thinks they are lying to cover the fact that Ron was beaten up.

Did you do that?

Because it was wicked!

And he won't say a word about who did it to him.

Okay, I guess it's time I made my appearance before anyone else is hurt. And yes I may have attacked your brother. I'll be there in a second

Harry exited the common room down Gryffindor's passageway and into the lion's den. The room fell silent as Harry walked in. The twins quickly took up flanking positions behind him. As disconcerting as it was to have that many people glare down at you at the same time

Harry kept his calm and made his way to the middle of the room where everyone cleared a space for him.

Deciding that he wasn't tall enough for everyone to see him easily Harry climbed onto one of the couches and then remained floating as he crossed his legs. The room gasped in fear and backed away from the floating boy, all but three Weasleys and one Costa that is. Caitlyn and Mia had moved so that they were also flanking Harry. Hermione was absent as she was still in the library studying.

Even Finnegan and Thomas moved forward to confirm their allegiance or to get away from Percy Weasley, Harry wasn't sure which it was but didn't care at that particular moment. He raised his voice to address the room at large.

"I hear you are confused as to my heritage. Maybe this will clear things up." Harry held out both hands palms facing up forward to show he was unarmed, then he proceeded to conjure three balls of fire and had them juggled around a bit until most of the room were looking at him with awe, respect and fear.

"I am the heir of both Gryffindor and Slytherin. Any questions?"

"How can you be the heir of both?" A brave little first-year posed the question.

"That is for me to know and for you to speculate on. I can assure you it is the truth. Ask Professor McGonagall if you must. The Potter line is completely descended from Gordric Gryffindor himself."

"But you are in Slytherin. How can you be both?" A confused fifth year asked.

"It's in my blood and that's something the sorting hat cannot change. The sorting hat put me in Slytherin because it believed it would help me more than being in Gryffindor."

"So you are saying that Slytherin is better than Gryffindor." It was a fourth year who commented this time.

“I did not say that. I merely pointed out that the sorting hat put me in Slytherin because it would benefit me in the long run. You were all put in Gryffindor for a reason, because being here helps you.”

One by one the Gryffindors all nodded and fell to one knee. Of course Ronald and Percy were being stubborn and merely just scowled at Harry. There was another as well. The fourth year who had commented was leaning against the wall glaring at everyone, Harry in particular.

Who's that? Harry asked.

Cormac McLaggen.

He's a bloody pain in the...

Thanks guys.

Harry smirked as he tried not to laugh. He nodded to the room and spoke one last time before he lowered himself and left, “Hogwarts is changing and I expect Gryffindor to change with it. Most of you will have heard of my guardian being a werewolf by now. You are not to comment on it ever again. Professor Lupin is taking the wolfsbane potion and will not harm a single one of you.”

Chapter 33: Connect four

Over the next week or two Hogwarts underwent some major changes. Whilst Dumbledore sat in the Headmaster's chair it was clear to everyone, down to the little Hufflepuff first-years, that he was no longer in control. Dumbledore sat there like a broken man, his usual twinkle was gone. He no longer had random words of insanity for them at dinner nor did he dictate in what way the school ran.

That power had passed to McGonagall now who, with the support of the three heirs of Hogwarts, had taken up the mantle of headmistress. The other professors referred to her, the students looked to her for help and she controlled every aspect of the curriculum. The only part of being a Headmistress that was lost to her was the wards and the title. In name she was still deputy head and Dumbledore is still the one who controls the wards.

Harry had been tempted to remove Dumbledore altogether and hand over total power to McGonagall but Remus convinced him otherwise. Whilst they as a group were almost ready to take on Voldemort the rest of the school wasn't. As much as they all liked the job McGonagall was doing Harry had to admit, Dumbledore was still much more powerful. Even Professor Snape couldn't match him and Harry knew his head of house was one of the most powerful wizards out there.

True to their word Remus and Professor Snape had, along with the adult circles, began their plan to ruin both Dumbledore financially and politically. Within a very short space of time (one week) they had stripped him of every one of his titles save his order of Merlin and his position as head of the Dumbledore family as such a thing was hereditary and could not be changed till the headmaster's death.

For the first time in history a Regent was holding the position of Chief Warlock in the Wizengamot, Remus was voted in with a staggering majority. The old headmaster had also lost his position as Chairman of the International Confederation of Wizards. And Harry was happy when it was appointed to the Italian representative, Antonio Costa.

They were also able to lay so many charges at Dumbledore's feet that a good proportion of the Dumbledore estate had been absorbed into the Potter/Evans one. The Malfoys and the Weasleys also benefited from this scheme. Although it was almost nothing to the Malfoys the Weasleys were so appreciative of it Harry was bombarded with thank you letters from both Mr and Mrs Weasley.

The barriers between the houses have broken down as well. Once word got out that the three heirs of Hogwarts were all good friends the majority of the student body started rethinking their opinions of the other houses. As they did so Harry's inner circle and even the outer circle no longer hid their friendship and were being openly friendly with one another.

This of course led to the inevitable jealousy attack from Ronald and even Percy. There were several others who weren't so accepting of the changes. This resistance was centered mainly on the Gryffindors with another member of the 'light' house speaking out against Harry, Cormac.

There were several others as well, a Hufflepuff who thought Cedric had lost it and a Ravenclaw who would not listen to Luna. Lastly there was Pansy, the girl had been brainwashed by her father to believe the worst. Luckily Harry already had plans for all of them.

Those six aside the rest of the school were following Harry like little puppy-dogs. Or at least the Slytherins and the Gryffindors did. The Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws were busy following their own heirs until they realized that Harry was not just the heir of two houses but was in fact heir of the entire school that they too started following him around.

Needless to say it was a very different Hogwarts then the founders could have ever imagined. Whilst everyone was getting to know those from the other houses Harry's inner circle, now called the Order of Hogwarts, continued with their training as well as their war.

In those two weeks Fred and George had, along with their helpers, pranked Dumbledore another two times. Once Dumbledore had spent an entire day dressed in bright rainbow-colored robes that had been transfigured to look like a muggle suit. He then spent another beating

around Hogwarts as a goat. Dumbledore had become suspicious of what he was eating and thus stopped taking his meals in the Great Hall. But little did he know that the meals the house-elves sent him had also been tampered with by the Weasley team.

There was another two major pranks planned for the coming two weeks. Harry couldn't wait, especially for the finale. He had created some sort of unholy alliance with the four twins, Daphne, Blaise and Theo. The seven of them together could rule the world if they wanted to, the glints in their eyes when they were plotting was enough to scare anyone off.

Draco had, more or less, mastered the wolfsbane potion now and had taken over the brewing from Professor Snape who had the ever consistent task of restocking their infirmary. Especially with the twins trying to create their own joke shop products, the number of accidents those two get themselves into was staggering.

The entire order was still working on casting their spells silently save for the second years and Harry. Harry had already mastered all of his spells to fourth year silently and was now working on new fifth year spells as well as casting his second and third year spells wandlessly. They had researched spells up to sixth year level and the five older members of the order were now hard at work at mastering all of them silently.

Harry also ensured the group got regular exercise; they would go and play pickup games of quidditch once a week or sometimes soccer games. Remus was now teaching them the Patronus Charm that Harry had been researching ever since their visit to Azkaban. Their lessons took place every fortnight whilst they had Occulmency lessons with Professor Snape every other week.

Their progress with their Occulmency lessons was greatly varied. As usual Harry did the best and it was unsurprising to see Neville and Draco following close behind. Harry's shields were such that he could block all but the most forceful of mind attacks from Professor Snape himself. According to Professor Snape Harry could be well on his way to learning Legimency by year's end.

They all had their own individual tasks to work on as well; the Blacks continued training in their languages. Harry was almost fluent in the languages he had started learning last year and had added Draco's three languages to his list. Draco had already mastered the three and was moving on to eastern languages such as Chinese and Japanese. The Weasleys were barely fluent in the three languages they had started with and were now studying Italian and Spanish.

Arianna, Ginny and the Costa have received three visits from Andromeda Tonks, Tonks' mother, who was teaching them various spells and potions for healing. The research team (Hermione, Anthony and Terry) were going through every single book on Horcuxes and/or Voldemort that they could find either in the main library or in Ravenclaw's collection.

Theo, Daphne and Blaise continued to plan Dumbledore's downfall. They also worked on gathering information on every Professor and organizing that information so that they could easily retrieve it whenever they need it. Luna and Cedric had the task of watching over the student population. They were both also helping the adults with their political plots.

There were also quidditch practices three nights a week as the first match of the year was coming up, Slytherin verses Gryffindor. Harry and Draco spent hours pursuing little bits of parchments scribbling out plays and tactics. The Gryffindors were also preparing for the match as well. Fred and George were called away to practice nearly every night.

Unsurprisingly the order was very tired, most members did not get more than six hours of sleep a night. And even then they were cramming their homework into classes such as History of Magic, Astronomy or Care of Magical Creatures. They were lucky to have Charlie as he was very understanding, allowing them to work on their other homework when they had finished their tasks. He even gave them less homework then he did others.

It was on the weekend after the third prank on Dumbledore that Harry called for a break. "Alright, we've been working on this war for a month now and it's time we took a break. How about a game?" Harry

asked unsure what sort of wizarding games the twenty of them could all take a part in.

“How about chess? A tournament?” Theo asked with a smirk. He was undefeated, not even Professor Snape could win against him.

“Something were we are all on an even footing.” Harry answered with a glare. Theo and even Neville, to a lesser extent, were both able to see into the future and Harry and Daphne also had their own ways of winning which was unfair to the others.

“Football!” Neville called cheerfully. Ever since Harry had introduced the game to his best friend over two years ago Neville had become a huge fan of the sport.

“Hey Neville! In case you didn’t notice, there is a rainstorm outside.” Cedric laughed as he packed away his books. Neville flushed slightly as the rest of them laughed.

“Actually that isn’t a bad idea. I mean, there has to be someplace that is big enough inside Hogwarts right?” Terry asked thoughtfully.

Irene? Is there? Harry asked curiously

You’ve lost me here Harry, what is this football game?

You have to have seen us play it? It’s where we have this ball and we kick it around on the ground trying to get it into a goal.

No I haven’t seen you play it. I can only see what happens inside these walls. Nonetheless there is a place big enough to be used as a quidditch pitch so it should be big enough for your game.

Wonderful! How come we don’t use it for training on rainy days?

I remember one of the old headmasters saying something about the charms on the bludgers.

Can you show me where it is?

Of course.

Harry opened his mind as Irene fed him the information he needed to get to their new football field. "Okay, I've got the place. Let's get going." It took five minutes for everyone to pack up their things and then Harry led them out tossing his football around as he walked.

They went through numerous secret passageways until they reached the place Irene had mentioned. It was probably a good distance under the school and was, as Irene had said, the size of a standard quidditch pitch. There were even stands for spectators to sit.

Harry clapped his hands happily, "Excellent. So we shall split into even teams of ten. And to make things fair the four who haven't played before will be split equally between the two teams so we can teach them as we go."

Using Neville's randomizing spell they were easily organized into teams that were fairly evenly matched. They played a total of four games before Irene reminded them of the time. Harry's team had won three whilst other team had won one. They had many laughs as they tried to teach the newcomers how to play.

As they made their way back up to the Great Hall they joked and laughed at everything and anything. Harry grinned; he hadn't felt that relaxed since the summer. When they reached the Great Hall they did eventually split up and head for their own house tables.

Harry settled into his usual seat in the middle of the Slytherin table where he had a perfect view of the entire hall. Draco and Neville sat to either side of him as David dropped into his own seat across from Harry. They had just began eating whilst talking when Pansy decided to drop into the seat on David's right side which was usually reserved for those who had a report to make.

Setting down his fork with a sigh Harry looked to Pansy with a raised eyebrow. What does she want now?

Neville smirked and answered, who knows? Just ignore her, she'll give up and leave soon enough.

Shrugging Harry looked down and continuing eating, it was better than having to talk to Pansy he thought.

Yeah right, she's like going to leave just because Harry's ignoring her. She's like the giant squid. Draco drawled as he took a sip of his pumpkin juice. She never lets go of anything.

Harry snorted through a mouthful of mashed potatoes spraying Pansy with most of it. "Eh...whoops. Sorry about that." Harry smiled trying to look apologetic whilst he was still laughing inside; he tried his best to hold his laughter.

Pansy tried to glare at Harry and before he knew it Neville and Draco were laughing their heads off. Thankfully though, their mouths were empty. Harry bit his cheek as the rest of the table turned towards them. Once the rest of the table cracked up laughing at a potato covered Pansy Harry too lost it.

This in turn drew the attention of the rest of the hall. It wasn't long before the entire student body was laughing at Pansy who was desperately trying to get rid of the mashed potato in her hair, clothes and on her face. Even the majority of the professors were laughing to themselves. Professor McGonagall and Professor Snape, however, were more or less successful at hiding their laughter.

Professor Dumbledore stood as Pansy left the hall in tears with mashed potato flying out of her hair as she went. "SILENCE!" He tried unsuccessfully to get everyone to shut up, they were laughing even harder at the sight of the least popular person in Hogwarts running away covered in Harry Potter's dinner. Even Millicent refrained from chasing after her; she was too busy laughing as she leant on Brian for support.

Harry grinned as he tried to regain his breath. Oh boy that was good. Thanks Draco!

No problem! I still can't believe you covered her with a mouthful of potatoes! Draco started laughing again as the memory took over.

It was brilliant! I wonder why Millicent didn't follow her. Harry asked both of his best friends.

Oh, you didn't notice? But you haven't really been around the common room much lately. She's taken a fancy to Brian...Neville smirked.

Harry looked across at his friend and raised an eyebrow, what do you mean? Did you or Theo put him up to it?

Neville just smirked wider and shrugged, I'm not saying anything.

Except you already did, Draco shook his head as he continued to eat. The rest of the students had settled down by then and the other Slytherins were all thanking Harry for the most entertaining spectacle that they had ever seen.

Nice one!

That should teach Pansy her place!

Good going Harry!

Harry grinned as his other close friends offered their congratulations and comments, thanks guys! I wondered what she wanted in anyway.

I did happen to overhear her talking to Millicent about Lance. I think Pansy wants Lance as much as Millicent wants Brian. Daphne informed Harry from her seat next to Neville.

Harry turned to her with a smirk. And how loud were the girls speaking that you just so happened to overhear their conversation?

Hey, leave her alone! She does share a dorm with them. Neville scowled.

Wow! Relax Neville! I was just joking. Anyways I'll talk with Lance and Brian later so we can...refine our plans. Harry grinned with excitement.

Who's interfering now? Draco asked with a smirk.

Harry just shrugged and loaded his plate with some cakes that had just appeared. I'm just...having some fun that's all...

Fun! Draco, Neville and Daphne all shook their heads and continued to eat.

Chapter 34: Girls and Boys

A week later Harry was sitting in his armchair with an open defense book in front of him, but it wasn't the book that was holding his attention. There was a certain Ravenclaw girl that was holding his attention; it had been getting worse since term started. Harry often found himself daydreaming about her and he hated it, not because he hated her, in fact he liked her a lot and that was the problem.

It was so distracting he was unable to sleep at times and he even had a hard time concentrating on his studies. He desperately wanted to tell her but wasn't sure if she would return his feelings and he didn't want to risk losing the friendship they had. Harry really liked her, she was smart, well brought-up and she understood him in a way not even Draco and Neville could.

He wasn't the only one with this problem though. Harry had noticed the others were noticing each other. Some were subtle but most were not. Draco in particular had a habit of watching Daphne out of the corner of his eye whenever she was in the room. Neville was following Ginny around like a lost puppy dog. Blaise was also watching Hermione rather intently.

Even the girls were watching the boys with gooey eyes. Ginny wouldn't stop watching Harry and that made him uncomfortable, particularly because he knew Neville liked her. Harry also realized that Daphne was in fact obsessed with Neville and that Hermione and Luna were both waiting for Theo to notice them but the one girl he wanted, he couldn't tell who it was she was after.

Harry was brought out of his thoughts by a small commotion happening at the Ravenclaw entrance. Curious Harry looked up to see Theo running after Arianna into the otherwise deserted room. Everyone else was either in one of the accompanying rooms or they had retired for the night. Quietly setting his book down Harry slipped into the shadows and listened in on their conversation.

"Please Ari, why not?"

“I can’t tell you. Theo, I just don’t like you that way. I like H...someone else.” Arianna blushed furiously as she almost slipped. “Besides, the other girls like you and I can’t do that to them. Sorry.”

Theo sighed and let go of her arm. “Can you at least tell me who it is? I won’t tell anyone but I need to know so that I can...move on. You have no idea how long I’ve liked you, even last year.”

“I didn’t know. I’m sorry. You’re a great friend Theo but I don’t think we could be...together. I’ve liked Harry for almost as long.”

Harry’s mouth fell open and he fought to keep silent. Whilst he remained outwardly still Harry’s heart was racing. She liked him! His mind chanted that one phrase over and over again until Theo spoke again.

“Harry?” Theo’s eyes widened knowing he could never compete with their leader.

“Yeah...I’m sorry but I’ve got to go. Draco needs this book and I need my sleep. You’ll find your girl but she isn’t me.” Arianna left unaware that the object of her affections was barely an arm’s reach away in the shadows watching her.

Theo remained where he was in shock; he had always thought that they would be good together. They were both intellectuals and were both more refined than some of the others.

Harry left his safe haven and moved forward to guide his friend to his chair. So yes Theo had just asked out the girl of his dreams but he was still a friend and he was in shock. “Are you alright?”

“Harry?” Theo jumped as he looked at Harry and realizing that he must have heard the entire conversation Theo grew red with embarrassment. “I...Ari...”

Smiling Harry shook his head, “It’s okay. You like her too, that’s understandable. I mean, she’s great. But she was right you know.

Several of the other girls really like you and if you don't want to lose them I'd move pretty quickly."

Theo nodded his thanks, "Yeah, I will. I've just got to get over Ari. It might take a while though."

Harry nodded his understanding, "That's cool, but just know that I will be going after her."

"You too, huh?" Theo smiled unsurprised; he really should have seen it coming. Arianna was the smartest girl in their group and most ways so was Harry. They had both lost their family at an early age only to be raised by their relatives, they could relate to each other in ways Theo would never understand. "Well, I guess I'll retire for the evening. Good luck, Harry. You two will be great together."

Clasping Harry on the shoulder one last time Theo left. Harry returned to his armchair and his book but yet again he was distracted with thoughts of Arianna. Giving up on the book Harry decided to turn in and ask her out tomorrow. He would never be able to study especially knowing that she liked him too.

Harry woke early the next morning and took extra time to get ready making sure his normally messy hair was perfectly gelled and waited for whoever else was up early. He headed downstairs to find Daphne curled up in an armchair. And it was fairly obvious that she had been crying. Opening his senses Harry was hit with so much pain and longing he closed the connection off straight away.

"Hey Daphne, what's the matter?"

"Oh, it's nothing." Daphne wiped her eyes which were still red and tried to smile even as she sniffed.

Summoning a packet of tissues Harry handed it to her, "Come on, you can tell me. I might be able to help." Harry sincerely hoped he could. He hated seeing his friends in pain.

Daphne blew her nose delicately and sighed, "Don't laugh okay but I think I'm really starting to like Neville."

"Yes I know."

"Does everyone?" Daphne's eyes widened with shock.

"I don't think so. The reason I know is mostly from my empathy skills. I'm not sure if Neville noticed or not but probably not. He's been channeling everyone's emotions for so long that I don't think he can distinguish."

"I don't know what to do. It is obvious that he likes Ginny...he even...asked her out." Daphne's eyes filled with tears again and Harry sighed. Why did all of this have to happen now? But he knew the feelings have been building for a while that it was inevitable.

"What did she say?"

"I didn't stick around to find out. It's irrelevant anyway; the point is that he doesn't feel the same way about me."

"Maybe not now, but I know Ginny. She will have turned him down; she likes someone else...me. Neville might come around. Don't give up hope. Really, we're thirteen; we have all the time in the world." Harry tried to smile comfortingly.

That made Daphne smile, "Thank you Harry." She threw her arms around him and gave him a tight squeeze.

Hugging her back Harry smiled as he noticed the other boys had come down. His smile froze, however, when he spotted the jealous look on Draco's face. Little did he know that Harry wasn't the one he should be jealous of Harry thought with a sigh.

"Let's go to breakfast."

They headed up the stairs towards the Great Hall and Harry tried to gather his courage to ask Arianna out. Because of this he didn't

notice the heated discussion that Draco and Neville were having. When they arrived Harry moved to the Ravenclaw table where he spotted Arianna talking animatedly with Padma.

The entire hall paused as they watched with baited breath. Harry never talked to his Ravenclaw friends in the Great Hall and so everyone was surprised when he came to a stop in front of Arianna.

“Hey Ari, mind if we talk...in private.”

Arianna smiled and nodded, “I’ll catch up with you in Charms, Padma.”

They left the Great Hall and moved into an empty classroom not far away. Harry paced for a moment not sure how to ask his question. As Harry paced Arianna’s heart raced, was he going to ask her what she thought he was?

“Okay, um, I want you to answer honestly from your heart. Don’t feel you have to say yes just because I am your leader.” Harry took a deep breath before he started.

Arianna nodded as her heart skipped a beat. “Of course.”

“Well, our first Hogesmeade weekend is coming up and I was wondering if you would like to go together...on a date.” Harry released the breath he had been holding and stopped pacing now waiting for the Ravenclaw to answer.

“Definitely!” Arianna grinned and threw herself at Harry giving him a big hug which he returned with a matching grin.

They let go of each other after Harry had given her a small peck on the cheek. “We better get back to breakfast.”

“Yeah.”

Harry opened and held open the door for his almost girlfriend feeling like he was on the top of the world. They walked the short distance

back to the Great Hall holding hands. When they reached the door Harry smiled and let go of her hand letting her go through first. Harry followed a moment later and settled at his usual place with a grin.

Hey Draco, how do you feel about me dating your cousin?

No way! Draco looked up from his bacon at Harry with surprise. But what about this morning with Daphne?

Harry snickered into his food, I was just comforting her. She overheard something she wasn't ready to cope with and I had to help her with it.

Oh, well, good luck with Ari. Draco grinned as he continued to eat.

What's going on? Neville looked between the two noting the expressions on their faces.

Harry's dating Ari now. Draco added more food to his plate.

Oh, so you and Daphne aren't... Neville grinned glad for some reason that Harry wasn't after Daphne.

Why is everyone so obsessed with Daphne today? Harry smirked as Draco choked and flushed red.

Neville merely smiled and shrugged. She looked a little upset this morning that's all.

Yeah, well...Harry decided against interfering this time.

Well what? Draco had taken a drink of his pumpkin juice and was able to breathe again.

Never mind, I was sworn to secrecy. Harry smiled and continued to eat ignoring his friends' exasperated expressions. So Neville, what's this I hear about you and Ginny?

Nothing, it was Neville's turn to blush. She said no but in a nicer way of course, she still likes you Harry.

Ouch mate that sucks. Draco reached around Harry and patted Neville on the back.

Harry didn't comment but continued to attack his bacon.

Harry, you're awfully quiet. You knew didn't you? Neville asked slightly hurt.

Sighing Harry set down his cutlery and turned to look his friend in the eye. Yes, I guessed she was still after me. But I had my mind set on Ari so I didn't pay much attention to her.

You still could have told me and saved me all of that...Neville's mental voice was rising in pitch and the floor started quivering. The rest of the Great Hall looked around in shock and fear wondering what was causing the 'earthquake'.

Neville relax. There's a reason behind everything, you know that. Tell me, would you have believed me if she hadn't told you so herself? Harry breathed a sigh of relief as the floor settled and Neville visibly relax.

Oh, I suppose you're right as usual. I can't pretend it didn't hurt though.

You and Theo both and Daphne too. But you will all get through it and find the right person for you.

Harry took a drink of pumpkin juice before returning to his rapidly cooling bacon. Neville and Draco were shocked as they too continued eating, wondering who it was that had broken Daphne's heart. They tried asking Harry who remained completely silent on the subject. They finished breakfast and headed their separate ways, Harry to Care of Magical Creatures and the other two to Muggle Studies.

Another week had passed when Harry and Draco returned to the Slytherin common room after quidditch practice to find everyone whispering excitedly. Curious Harry made his way to where the rest of the third years, minus Pansy and Millicent, sat. He collapsed into

his armchair and looked at Daphne with a raised eyebrow. She was the person who everyone went to for their information. Although not overly smart or studious, Daphne had a habit of innocently 'overhearing' other's conversations.

"First Hogsmeade weekend. The day of Halloween." Daphne grinned. She was looking forward to going; she was out of her favorite chocolate and was hoping to stock up in the village.

"Great! We can stock up; we're out of...everything." Harry smirked and leaned back into his chair with a sigh. He was really looking forward to Halloween for the first time ever. Usually Halloween just reminded him of his parents but this year he got to spend the entire day with Arianna. That and Remus was going to be taking him to visit his parents' grave after the feast.

"I'm out of parchment myself, why we have to do so much studying is beyond me." Blaise shook his head smirking.

"Don't complain, at least it keeps our marks up. Besides, it's not like you study all that much." Theo poked his best friend in his side with his quill.

Harry snickered and summoned his book bag to get started on his homework. With the increased number of quidditch practices Harry and Draco, both, could barely find time to do their homework much less any extra studies on top of their prank war duties.

"Hey Harry."

"David! We haven't talked in a while. What's up?" Harry grinned as he moved over to give his brother room to sit down. While it wasn't really official or anything the whole school knew that Harry considered David to be his brother. That meant that David was also being followed around by other students who would do anything for him in the hopes that he would tell Harry. Remus was also given similar treatment although, because he was already a professor, it wasn't that different.

“I wanted to ask you...a favor. I heard the Hogsmeade weekend was coming up...and I sort of need a new quill. Tyler broke my last one.” David looked nervous.

“Sure, it’s no problem. I’ll remember to pick some up. Arianna would probably need some more parchment anyway.” Harry grinned and slapped the younger boy on the shoulder.

“Thanks Harry! I owe you one.” David was smiling as he searched his pockets for some money.

“Hey, don’t worry about it, my treat. After all, we are brothers right. But there is one thing I’d like for you to do. Come with me, Remus, Sirius and Sara to visit my parents?”

Everyone around the pair paused with shock; they all knew how important this event was to him. He was visiting his parent’s grave for the first time and they assumed he’d want to be alone, or not quite alone as his new father/guardian and god-parents would be there. Not even Draco and Neville were going and the three of them were usually so tight.

“I...you sure?” David hesitated.

“Yeah, if they’d still been alive they probably would have been named your god-parents. Or at least that’s what Remus said he would have done. We’re family now and I’d like for you to be there.”

“I..okay.”

“Great, I’ll talk to you again soon. But I’ve got quite a lot of homework to do right now.”

“Sure, no problem. So do I.” David grinned and waved as he went to join the rest of the first-years in another corner.

The next couple of weeks were the most tense the order had ever experienced. With their first Hogsmeade weekend coming up everyone was trying to ask each other out so as not to be going alone.

Some of the couples surprised even Harry. Daphne agreed to go with Draco even though she still liked Neville. When Harry asked her she said she was hoping to make Neville jealous.

And Theo had somehow plucked up the courage to ask Hermione out even though he supposedly still felt for Arianna or so he told Harry. Terry and Anthony were going with Hannah and Susan respectively which had Harry slightly surprised as he had thought it would have been the other way around.

Unfortunately there were some arguments that almost blew their entire Dumbledore operation. Blaise had tried asking Hermione out not realizing she was already going with Theo. Harry remembered the day Blaise had asked just hours after Theo had. Theo found out not long after and they were lucky Theo confronted Blaise in their private common room as it had turned into a yelling match.

//Flashback//

They were all sitting in the library working on their weekly homework when Theo burst in looking angrier than they had ever seen him.

“Blaise Zabini!” Theo’s yell could be heard from the common room.

Blaise looked up in surprise as did the rest of them. Theo was usually the quiet one; he rarely spoke let alone yelled. They would have expected it of Harry or Ginny, even Blaise, Draco and the twins would raise their voices once in a while but not Theo.

“Theo? What?...”

Blaise was barely able to dodge the spell Theo had sent him and it crashed into one of the spare tables. Harry stood with a frown. “I thought we had agreed to keep the noise level down to a minimum in here. If you guys can’t work out whatever it is quietly then take it into the dueling chamber.”

Theo’s anger subsided slightly as he gave Harry an apologetic smile, “Sorry, I just found out that some idiot had asked my date to

Hogsmeade.” He glared in Blaise’s direction. It was a good thing Hermione was in the dueling chamber working on some new spells or she’d be angry at both of them.

Blaise at least had the decency to look a little shamefaced. “I...you hadn’t exactly told me yet and she said no anyway...”

“I didn’t say anything? Everyone else knew how could you not know?” Theo raised an eyebrow. That was only partially true, only have the group had been informed by either Theo or Hermione. The other half were still unaware.

Neville stiffened as he felt a change in the air. Harry frowned as he tried to pinpoint what it was he was sensing.

Blaise shrugged with embarrassment. “I’m sure I’m not the only one...” Harry finally realized what it was he was getting from Blaise, guilt.

Theo glared at Blaise again before he snapped up his wand. The entire order had their own holsters now; Harry had insisted that everyone get their own. “Until you are ready to tell me the truth and apologize, don’t talk to me.” With that Theo left and the others returned to their studies.

//End Flashback//

The two of them did not talk to each other for a total of four days after that, it was the longest they had ever gone without speaking. Luckily their friendship broke through and they made up quickly after Blaise apologized and promised not to make a move on Hermione again.

Neville and Blaise were getting desperate as the weekend drew closer not wanting to be left alone. They had both considered asking Ginny or Luna but unfortunately neither of them was able to go to Hogsmeade this year. The twin quartet was, of course, going with each other. Cedric had decided to spend the day with some of his Hufflepuff friends whom he had been neglecting since he joined them.

Chapter 35: Hogsmeade

On Halloween morning Harry woke before the others feeling very excited, it was going to be a glorious day he thought. Getting dressed in a nice set of green robes that Remus had bought for him Harry waited as Draco and Neville woke seconds later and rushed to get ready. The third years were all excited about their first visit to Hogsmeade, especially since they all had their first dates. Neville had worked up the courage to ask Padma Patil to go with him and Blaise settled for Megan Jones.

After a quick breakfast Harry walked over to the Ravenclaw table to escort Arianna out. As they waited in line to be let out Harry smirked as he saw Pansy clinging to Lance's arm as they made their way past Filch. He felt sorry for his older friend but Pansy needed to be taught a lesson and there was no one better than Lance.

Whilst Harry had originally recruited Lance for his observation skills he had come to realize that there was much more to the fourth year than most people knew. He was cunning and sly beyond compare, a true Slytherin, and when he implemented something he could be as ruthless as the devil.

There was a time when Harry had needed to punish Zacharis Smith, the Hufflepuff who had been interfering with Harry's plans to unite Hogwarts. In return Harry had asked Lance to scare the idiot off but he did more than that. Lance had been so ruthless with his punishments that Zacharis has not spoken another word since and had been the soul of co-operation since.

When they reached Filch he checked their names sneering at Harry before he let them through. It was no secret that Filch didn't like Harry, he was completely Dumbledore's man but without the smarts to realize he was following the wrong wizard. Harry and Arianna started talking about quidditch as they made their way down to the carriages that took them to Hogsmeade.

Harry held open the door and helped Arianna into the carriage before getting in himself. They were joined by Draco, Daphne, Neville and Padma. It was slightly cramped as the carriages usually only cater for

four or five students. Nonetheless they had a grand time until they reached the village which is where they parted ways.

“So where to first?”

“Well, I am out of parchment.”

“Great! I need to pick up some quills for David anyway.” Harry smirked that he had guessed correctly.

With matching grins the pair made their way down to Scrivenshaft's where they purchased the necessities. As they still had some time before they were meeting the others for lunch they went for a walk around stopping at various stores. By the time they met up with the others Harry had purchased Arianna some of her favorite sugar quills along with a new hair clip that she had obviously liked.

“Let's go, we have to meet the others for lunch soon. We can come back later.”

They were at the Flourish and Blotts when Harry realized what the time was and was now trying to drag a reluctant Arianna away from her books. Harry had faced some difficult things thus far in his life but this had to be one of the hardest. Pulling the girl he likes away from the books she loves was no easy feat.

Fifteen minutes later they had finally left the bookstore after Harry had promised that they will return later that afternoon. Arianna had been saving her money for this for a while and wanted to stock up her personal library. Although why she would need to bother was beyond Harry, they did have access to the best library in the country after all.

“Harry! Arianna! Nice to see you could join us!” Blaise was smirking as he passed them on the way to the bathroom.

Not gracing Blaise with an answer Harry nodded to the maître d' as he lead Arianna over to their room in the back corner of the restaurant and pulled out her chair for her before taking his own seat.

They had decided to eat together at one of the nicer establishments instead of joining the rest of the students at the Three Broomsticks.

Draco had used his name to book them a private room as they didn't want to be disturbed. Harry looked around and noted the absence of Theo and Hermione. The other third years were all there and chatting happily, Harry caught the attention of a waiter and ordered drinks for Arianna and himself.

“So, where are Theo and Hermione?” Harry asked as Blaise returned to them.

“Last time I saw them they were still looking at some quills over in Scrivenshaft's.” Neville turned from Padma to answer Harry's question.

“Well, why don't we start first? They could be a while.” Harry smirked.

Consulting their menus everyone put in their orders. Harry ordered his favorite, lasagna, and Arianna asked for some spaghetti. Just as the waiter was about to leave Theo and Hermione walked in grinning completely covered in snow. Raising an eyebrow Harry drew his father's wand and dried their robes with a quick swish of his wand.

“So nice of you to join us. What were you two up to?”

Everyone smirked at the blushes that rose on their cheeks, “Nothing. Just walking around, lost track of time.”

Harry's sharp ears heard Blaise muttering, “I'll bet.” Fighting laughter Harry nodded to the two seats they had saved for the wanderers. “You better order before our lovely waitress gets tired of waiting.”

Theo and Hermione quickly consulted their menus and placed their orders with the blushing waitress. Talk turned to the upcoming quidditch season and the last two pranks on Dumbledore. The twins had let things go with a bang, quite literally as they filled the hall with

fireworks. Dumbledore had spent one day with rainbow colored hair and beard.

The other prank was not much in the way of public humiliation but it frustrated him to no end. The twins had, with the help of Irene, got into Dumbledore's office. They rearranged his shelves, broke his instruments and just generally trashed his office. And when he looked to repair things he certainly didn't get any help from the elves.

During their quest the twins happened to come across some interesting books on Horcuxes that looked to have been taken out of the Hogwart's library. At Harry's request they took those books out and moved them to the Ravenclaw library so that the research team could access them.

Their food arrived and they continued their conversation in between bites. When they were done the guys spilt the bills after much arguing and they separated again. As promised Harry led Arianna back to Flourish and Blotts and waited for her to continue her shopping whilst he looked at some books on advanced combat magic.

Once Arianna had brought her books and Harry had shrunk them for her they continued their tour of Hogsmeade. Harry smiled as they walked hand-in-hand stopping at various stores for a quick look or dropping by Zonko's to laugh at their latest products. On their way back they stopped for a look at the Shrieking Shack and Harry could see why Remus was so glad of Harry's dungeons.

The place looked like it was falling apart; it was almost as though one push of air would be enough to collapse the thing. Nonetheless Harry left it where it was and escorted Arianna back to the carriages. They ran into Blaise and Megan who had some interesting gossip to share.

"Hey Harry, Ari. I've got news for you."

"Blaise, Megan. What is it?" Harry nodded as they climbed into the same carriage thankful it was much emptier than it was on the trip there.

“It’s Lance and Pansy...”

“Oh, this will be good!” Harry smirked wondering how successful Lance was with his mission this time.

“We were at the three broomsticks to grab a drink and we saw it. They were sitting in a corner with Brian and Millicent chatting. Oh man, Lance picked the one thing that will get to Pansy more than anything else. You know Cho Chang?” Blaise whistled appreciatively as he thought of what happened.

“Oh yeah, she’s our new seeker. She’s actually pretty good, although against Harry...” Arianna shrugged and Harry smirked.

“Yes, well she was moving past him to join her friends at their table when Lance stopped her. And it seemed like they were friends. So they were talking for a while and Pansy was getting really annoyed.”

“She kept trying to catch Lance’s attention but he was fully ignoring her and Millicent was fully obsessed with Brian so she was stuck sitting there with no one to talk to.” Megan smiled evilly, it seemed as though her time with Blaise had brought out the Slytherin in her.

“Anyway,” Blaise glared at her softly before continuing with his story. “This is the best part. He just pulled Cho into his lap and started kissing her. And I don’t mean your usual friendly kiss. It was a full snog, right there in the middle of the Three Broomsticks.”

“It looked like he had used a notice me charm of some sort because the entire bar was watching them. And Cho seemed to be enjoying herself as well. It’s been a while since she had been with anyone. They were there for quite a while.”

“Coming from you...” Blaise grinned teasingly, “And that’s about it. Pansy tried to break them apart but Brian had put up a good solid shield up and she couldn’t get through it. Then she just stomped her foot in frustration and left crying. Everyone was making very...suggestive comments towards Lance and Cho and some were even putting Pansy down even further.”

“To be fair though they were generally wizards who have had a little too much firewhiskey. Although Flint did it on purpose I think. He hates Pansy almost as much as we do.” Megan smiled happily glad to see Pansy get what she deserved after all this time. Pansy had been bullying the other girls in their year since she was first sorted into Slytherin. The only ones who she didn't touch were Arianna and Daphne for their connections to Harry and Draco.

“ Good job Lance.” Harry nodded approvingly. “Phase one is complete. Next step, the cold shoulder. I'm going to get the house together whilst someone distracts Pansy and we get everyone to ignore her.” Harry grinned, he didn't like hurting those who he considered helpless but he finally realized that Pansy was hardly helpless after hearing what she had been doing to the other girls. It was simply just justice.

The carriage was filled with their evil thoughts as they headed back to the castle for the Halloween feast. Harry gave Arianna a hand down from the carriage and led her inside, before he let her run off with Megan to the Ravenclaw table he leaned down and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek.

Grinning sheepishly Harry nodded and handed Arianna her purchases before he headed for the Slytherin table with Blaise who had also said his goodbyes to Megan. They chatted about the girls with silly grins on their faces when the others started trickling in. Neville and Theo both said goodbye to their girls at the door whereas Draco led Daphne over to their table and pulled her chair out for her.

Everyone was happy as they enjoyed the feast laid out for them. Harry frowned though as he sensed something, looking around he spotted Ginny watching him with a sad expression. He took a deep breath and reached out with his magical senses and found a lot of pain and heartbreak around the room.

Focusing harder he found the other sources, Luna, Daphne and surprisingly enough, Cedric. There were several others; Pansy, obviously, who was sitting with at the end of the table alone and

Ronald Weasley who was also sitting by himself. There were several others whom he wasn't concerned with; his friends though were another story. He understood Ginny, and Daphne's pain. It was going to take longer than two weeks for them to recover from their crushes.

Another surprise was the lack of anything but happiness from Theo. Harry hadn't thought he would have recovered so quickly. But seeing the looks he was getting from and giving Hermione Harry didn't take long to work it out. Luna, he suspected was after Theo and watching Theo and Hermione together was probably not very helpful. Cedric, however, was an entirely unknown quantity. Harry couldn't quite figure out who it was Cedric was yearning for but from the intensity of the emotions, he would say it was pretty deep.

Putting it off for the moment Harry made a mental note to check with his friend as the dishes in front of him cleared. Harry took one last drink from his goblet before he called for David. "Hey, let's get going."

"Right, I'm coming Harry. Olivia, Tyler, see you guys later." David said goodbye to his friends whilst Harry said goodbye to his. Together they made their way through various shortcuts to reach their father's office. Harry knocked on the door and they entered when they heard Remus call out to them.

Chapter 36: Godric's Hallow

"Hello boys, are you ready to get going?" Remus came out of his bedroom carrying an outdoor cloak over one arm.

"Yeah, where are Sara and Sirius?" Harry pulled his own cloak from his pocket as he asked.

"Oh, they should be there waiting for us. David, do you have a cloak?" Remus looked at his son in concern.

"I guess you don't mean this one?" David asked, looking confused. Harry gestured to his outdoor cloak and David smiled sheepishly. "Oh no, I didn't bring one with me. Mum said I probably wouldn't need it."

"Leila was always more of the indoor type." Remus smiled affectionately.

"Well, at least now I know what to get you for Christmas." Harry grinned and headed for the fireplace. "You guys go first."

Remus flooed first followed by David after Harry told them where to go. Harry brought up the rear, summoning Jade as soon as he stepped out of the fireplace. Seconds later Jade popped into the room and bowed. "Master Harry?"

"Jade, will you do me a favor and fetch an outdoor cloak that will fit David?"

"Of course, Master Harry." Jade popped out again as Harry dropped into his usual seat.

"Welcome to my home and your soon-to-be home -- Evans Estate." Harry grinned at David who was looking around the parlor in awe.

"Me? I'll be living here?" David inspected one of the sculptures in the corner of the room. "What about mother and Uncle Gary?" Harry looked to Remus for that answer, not having met either of them.

“Well your mother has agreed to visit for Christmas as did your uncle Gary but neither mentioned moving, so we’ll just have to ask them then.” Remus grinned as he thought of having a true family.

Harry was getting impatient as they waited for Sirius and Sara to arrive. His god-parents had finally moved into the Black family home after months of cleaning and renovations.

Jade returned with a nice cloak that Harry had outgrown just last summer. It was black with dark green trim and Harry thought it would be perfect for David -- the newest Slytherin in the family.

“Padfoot! Sara! How lovely to see you!” Harry smiled as his god-parents stepped out of the fireplace looking somewhat disheveled. Their clothes were in disarray and Sara’s normally perfect hair was sticking up all over the place making her look a lot like Hermione.

“Well, yes we lost track of time.” Sirius blushed as he straightened his robes and pulled out his outdoor cloak, resizing it. Sara did the same beside him nervously fidgeting with something on her left hand.

“Sara...what?” Remus was shocked. It seems as though Harry wasn’t the only one to have noticed. David was a bit confused, this being his first time to meet either of them.

“Oh yes, I, that is...we are engaged.” Sirius smiled nervously.

“Yes!” Harry grinned and ran over to give his god-father a big hug. “Congratulations. You asked Mr. Nott though right?” Harry turned and gave Sara a hug just as big but somewhat gentler.

“Of course I did, Pronglet. What do you take me for?” Sirius mock glared at his god-son making Harry laugh as Remus moved in to congratulate the pair.

“Really, congratulations. You two will make a wonderful couple. Not that you haven’t been a great one for the last century.” Remus smirked, the marauder in him showing through. “We’ve got to get

going. But...Sirius, Sara, meet my son, David Lupin. David, this is Sirius Black, Harry's god-father and my best friend, and Sara Nott, Harry's god-mother."

"It's nice to meet you Mr. Black." David smiled and held out his hand confidently.

"Call me Sirius. And by Merlin, he's like a miniature Harry." Sirius gave his trademark grin as he shook hands with

David, who looked back over his shoulder and grinned at Harry. Sirius might not have known it but he had just given David the biggest compliment possible. The young Lupin looked up to Harry as a big brother, mentor and idol. To be positively compared to him was, in the young Slytherin's opinion, the greatest honor he could ever receive.

"Well, I tried." Harry grinned back at his younger brother and patted him on the back. "Let's get going shall we? Remus, do you have the portkey?" Harry was anxious to get things underway and visit his parents for the first time since he was a baby.

"Alright little Pronglet, there's no need to be so pushy. Your brother was just being polite." Sirius pretended to be calm, when he was longing desperately to return to the place that held so many memories. He needed to finally say goodbye to man who was in all ways that mattered his brother. Sirius felt that he was Harry's uncle, as well as his godfather.

"Don't even pretend you aren't excited." Harry made a face at Sirius and looked to Remus who was watching them with amusement. "Please Moony! Can we go already?"

"Okay. Everyone gather round." Remus held out the old paper bag and made sure everyone was touching it before he triggered it, "1...2...3..."

They landed in the dark all stumbling slightly as they tried to get a feel for their surroundings. Peering through the darkness they couldn't

see anything but snow, although Harry's sharpened eyes allowed him to register some trees and some cottages in the distance.

"Lumos."

Four beacons of light appeared as Remus, Sirius, Sara and Harry all lit their wand at the same time -- or in Harry's case, his father's wand. Blinking, Harry's eyes adjusted to the light as he looked at his surroundings. Harry spotted a nearby tombstone and read the name inscribed there, "Abbott." He looked around at all the other tombstones and swallowed.

"Come on Harry, they are over this way."

Remus led them past several rows of tombstones until he found the one they were seeking. Harry was surprised that Remus knew where to go, as all the tombstones looked the same to him. But as Remus' wand light fell upon the tombstone in question Harry could easily see why.

The tombstone was made of white marble that glowed in the moonlight. But even without that Harry was felt, a certain warmth radiating from that area. Harry knelt in front of it as he read the inscription. His parent's names were engraved neatly along with their date of birth and death along with one simple quote. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death..." Harry looked at Remus; his eyes were bright as he fought to keep his emotions in check. "...What does it mean? Who wrote it?"

"Look at it closely and tell me you don't recognize the script." Remus winced he fought to keep from crying. No matter how many times he had returned it never got any easier.

Harry frowned as his memory dragged up a picture of the anonymous note he had received on his first Christmas after starting Hogwarts -- "Dumbledore!"

Before Remus could respond Sirius let out a loud howl next to them and fell to his knees. "I'm sorry James. I thought...I had it all worked

out...I'm so sorry." Sirius started crying. That triggered the emotions of almost everyone present.

Everyone fell to their knees sobbing, except David who remained on the side silently, not wanting to intrude in this private moment. It took a few minutes, but Harry recovered enough to wipe his tears. He laid a hand on the tombstone feeling that amazing warmth again and withdrew his father's wand again.

"Orchideous."

Harry placed the conjured bunch of flowers on the ground in front of the tombstone and added various charms to ensure the flowers stayed fresh and alive for another year, until he returned. With a sigh Harry looked at the tombstone again, "I miss you mum, dad. I love you both and I always will. I will do everything I can to get that bastard, I swear."

James' wand lit up as Harry made his promise. Remus looked up in shock. "Harry...do you know what you just did?"

Harry smiled at his new dad. "Yes, I know. But I'm going to have to face him and kill him anyway, right?"

"Well yes...but if you fail you will lose your magic...forever." Sirius too was shocked at what his god-son had done although not as much as Remus, because Sirius himself was impulsive. As one who grew up in a traditional pureblood family, Sirius also understood a matter of honor.

"If I lose I wouldn't need my magic anyway. He'll kill me in a second." Harry grimaced not liking that possibility.

"We will just have to make sure it doesn't come to that." Sara said grimly as she raised her wand to remove the tear tracks from her face.

Harry nodded and turned to David who was still standing there quietly waiting. "Come on David. I want you to meet my parents."

“Eh...Harry, they are dead...even you couldn't...” Sara tears up again at the thought that her best friend was completely lost to her.

“Well yes, but I can feel them.” Harry closed his eyes resting his hand on the tombstone and let the feeling wash over him. Even though there was a fairly brisk wind blowing through the graveyard Harry could still feel the warmth, it was like his parents were there with him at that very moment.

“...Hey all, we love you too...” Harry's eyes unfocused and he was speaking in a voice that was not his own. Remus, Sirius and Sara all jumped to their feet in shock at the voice they had not heard for over twelve years. Even David was shocked even though he didn't recognize the voice.

“James?” Sirius asked cautiously looking at Harry intently.

“...Padfoot! I don't have much time. This is a major drain on Harry's powers...”

“...Sara, congratulations on your engagement, it is about time you guys tied the knot...” This time it wasn't James' voice that came out of Harry's mouth. It was Lily's.

“Lily!” Sara grinned.

“...Yes it's us. There are some things we need to tell you before Harry collapses...” Lily spoke quickly.

“...Sirius, we forgive you, forget about it already. Just promise me that one of you will get that rat for me...” James growled through Harry.

“...Also, Remus, make sure Harry gets a full night's rest after this and is tended to. Maybe by those twins, they are great healers...” Lily grinned.

“You know about the Costas?” Remus asked shocked.

“...We’re with Harry every minute of every day...” Lily said

“...We witness everything through his eyes...” James continued.

“...Oh no, Harry’s losing it. Quickly, there are books on how he does this in the Potter Library...”

“...Try not to do it too often. It could overwhelm him and he is still young...”

“...Keep on doing everything you are doing for him. You’re all doing great...”

“...Tell Harry we love him...”

Harry’s emerald eyes snapped back and he fell forward, straight into Sirius’ arms. Everyone froze for a minute due to the shock they had just received.

“Well that was unexpected.” Remus recovered first and cleared his throat. He looked at Harry who was still out in Sirius’ arms. “I was going to show him the cottage too. I guess that needs to wait for another time.”

Remus retrieved the return portkey and gestured for everyone to touch it. Sirius kept a tight hold of Harry, resting one of his hands on the old shoe before putting his own finger on the portkey. Sara and David grabbed hold of the boot seconds before Remus activated it.

They landed back at Evans Estate and Remus handed the used portkey to Blinky who popped in to greet them. “May we have some tea and something light to eat? And would you send an elf to Hogwarts to fetch the Costas?” Remus asked, but then hesitated, wondering how to get them back. He frowned, wondering if he could access the Potter network with the trace amount of Potter blood he had.

“The thestrals?” David suggested.

Remus grinned at his son, "Perfect!" He summoned a piece of parchment and a quill from his room and wrote a quick note to Blaise who could easily ask the thestrals for help. He handed the note to Blinky, "Get this to Blaise Zabini as soon as possible. He will pass the word to his cousins."

"At once, Master Remus," replied Blinky.

"That was a good idea David, thanks." Remus grinned at his son who smiled in return.

The elf popped out and everyone gathered around Harry, who was lying on the couch where Sirius had laid him. "Is Harry going to be okay?" Sara looked over the back of the couch anxiously.

"I think he'll be fine, but once the Costas get here we will know for sure. I think the channeling just depleted his magical core."

It was silent for the next few minutes whilst they waited. Blinky returned with the tea and some fresh fruit from the Estate's garden. The four of them sat picking at the grapes. Thirty minutes later they heard the sound of horses neighing. David frowned, "The horses out the back said that the thestrals are here."

"Can you go out and meet them then?" Remus asked with dawning realization.

Once David had left the room Sirius turned to the others. "How did he know that?"

"It's in his blood. I think we now know who Blaise's father is." Remus grinned. He had forgotten that the Wilkes were beastspeakers.

"Really? Who?" The three adults turned to the doorway to find David had returned with the Costa twins as well as Blaise. Blaise looked excited as he was going to finally find out who his father is.

“I’m just guessing, but I believe it to be David’s uncle.” Remus gestured for the Costa twins to look at Harry even as he spoke.

“Uncle Gary? But...” David looked at Blaise uncertainly. “Us? Cousins?”

Everyone could understand his questions, the two looked nothing alike. Blaise had classic Italian features that he had inherited from his mother along with bright hazel eyes. David on the other hand was of much smaller stature and had inherited Remus’ wavy brown hair and chocolate brown eyes. “It’s just speculation at the moment. We’ll ask your uncle when he comes over for Christmas. Right now, my main concern is Harry.” Remus smiled.

Blaise was speechless as he nodded, he had waited this long, the identification of his father could wait a bit longer. Harry was their first priority. Mia and Cara were waving their wands over the now glowing form of Harry. What felt like ages later but was in reality only a matter of minutes the twins stopped and the glow of their scanning spells faded.

“He isn’t hurt physically...”

“Well that isn’t true, he is exhausted...”

“What I meant is that he isn’t injured...”

“Exactly! We’ve done what we can...”

“But he’s going to need a full night’s rest...”

“And a full breakfast when he awakes.”

“But, after that he should be okay.”

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief at Cara’s last words. After the Costas and Blaise had had a spot of tea they were escorted out back by David so they could return to Hogwarts via Hagrid’s thestrals.

Remus decided that as it the next day was Sunday, he could afford to stay with Harry.

With Sirius' help Remus was able to get Harry up the stairs and tucked him into his bed. Once Harry was settled the others made their own way back to their beds, Sirius and Sara still had their own rooms at Evans Estate for emergencies. After the events of the evening, a good night's rest was needed by all.

Chapter 37: Family is important

As the excitement of their first Hogsmeade weekend wore off the third-years turned their minds back to their daily tasks. Training had been stepped up to the next level, with Kingsley and Tonks on break from their Auror duties the order now had nightly sessions. Those on the quidditch teams went straight from dinner to practice to training to bed.

It was a grueling schedule and they were yawning consistently through their classes. The professors not in the know were surprised that those who fell asleep in their classes were still achieving better results than those who were wide awake. Harry was able to recover from his ordeal at Godric's Hallow surprisingly quickly to the shock of everyone.

By midday the day after Halloween Harry was up and about studying, flying and even brewing potions. Within hours of his waking and after a full breakfast the Costa twins had given him the go ahead for quidditch practice. With the first match of the season coming up Harry and Flint, Harry's 'vice-captain', had upped the number of training sessions. They even went as far as practicing on the lawn if another team was using the Quidditch Pitch.

Whilst the hostility between the two playing houses, Slytherin and Gryffindor are starting to die down the rivalry was as strong as ever. The number of friendships blooming between the two houses was numerous, particularly within the younger three year levels. Regardless, both houses were still fiercely competitive, always trying to get the best of each other.

And thus far the Slytherins were leading. The only year level where Slytherin or Ravneclaw weren't leading was the fifth years where, surprisingly, the four twins led the tally. Learning from their Slytherin friends the three Gryffindors and one Hufflepuff didn't get caught as often as they used to on their troublemaking rounds.

"Harry, what do you think?" Draco called Harry out of his reverie.

“I’m sorry. What were we talking about?” Harry looked up at the members of his quidditch team.

They were in the midst of a last-minute planning session for the match the next day. The Slytherin quidditch team was gathered around the fire in the common room with diagrams of various plays in front of them. They were all determined to do well and thoroughly beat the Gryffindors. Flint, Adrian and Cassius were all eager to get even with the other seventh-years.

Percy Weasley and Oliver Wood, particularly, were a pain in their side for as long as they could remember. Draco, of course, just wanted to win as he did with everything. And Crabbe and Goyle simply wanted to play a good game of quidditch.

“We were talking about using play five, you know the one Flint thought up last year.” Draco looked at Harry curiously hoping he was okay.

“Right, well Theo said the weather’s going to be pretty bad tomorrow. So I think it’s best if we avoid that one and use the others. I personally am a favorite of play twenty.” Harry smirked, play twenty was one he had created after hearing stories of the way his father used to play chaser.

“Well of course you are! You made it!” Draco rolled his eyes with a sigh.

“I think with the number of plays you have so far we should be good till I can find the snitch. I’ll be up against Finnegan so it should be easy.”

They all agreed with that assessment, Finnegan was the only player on the Gryffindor team they didn’t have to worry about. The twins, chasers and Wood were all in superb condition and would be hard to beat. After another half-an-hour of discussing the plays in detail Harry called it a night and they headed for bed.

The following Harry, Draco and Neville woke early and headed upstairs for breakfast. Once they reached the Great Hall Harry paused with a frown. The enchanted ceiling was dark with rain clouds and through the windows they could make out the pouring rain and howling wind that was throwing branches of various trees into the magically protected windows.

“Great! These are the worst conditions we could have hoped for.” Still frowning to himself Harry sat down at his usual spot and started piling his plate high with various things; toast, bacon and fruit. Over two years of quidditch training and matches had taught Harry the importance of a solid breakfast.

Beside him Draco was also eating like mad as the rest of the team arrived. Flint slid into the seat opposite Harry none too happy himself. “It’s not looking good captain. It’s worse than Nott had predicted.” Harry nodded as he poured himself a cup of tea. Theo had foreseen it but he obviously hadn’t described it right.

“We’ll manage. Besides, we have a few tricks up our sleeves.” Harry grinned as he thought of the spells Arianna and the others had found for them. The rest of the team nodded and started eating silently. The other third-years arrived not long after and settled down to their own breakfasts wishing Harry and Draco good luck.

When they were done Harry and Flint led the team down to their changing rooms. Once they had all changed they looked to Harry, ready for his first prep-talk.

“Okay guys, I’m not going to lie to you. The conditions we are playing in aren’t great but we’ve got the best team in the whole school. And with some warning we were able to come up with a few spells to help us out.”

Harry drew his wand; he was never without it except when he was taking a shower. “First, impervious.” Harry cast the water repelling charm on his glasses, robes, gloves and shoes. “Secondly, tepidus.” Harry applied the spell to the clothes he wore under his robes waiting as his teammates followed suit.

“Okay good, well, I don’t think there is anything else to say. You know what to do, we’ve practiced hard now let’s go and show those Gryffindors who has the best team!”

With an enthusiastic cheer the Slytherin team left the comfort of their changing rooms and headed out. Even with the charms they used the Slytherins found themselves having to walk sideways as they moved into the centre of the pitch. The Gryffindors were already there and Wood approached Harry with a half-smile on his face. Harry smiled back as they shook hands.

“Mount your brooms!” Harry’s improved hearing picked up Madam Hooch’s voice over the howl of the wind.

Stepping back from Wood Harry smoothly pulled one leg out of the mud and swung it over his broom. The others weren’t so graceful; Finnegan fell over twice before he could get on his broom with some help from Wood. Once they had all mounted their broomsticks Madam Hooch blew her whistle and the game began.

It was obvious from the beginning that the Slytherins had the advantage not only because of their faster brooms but also from the two charms they had used earlier. Within five minutes the Gryffindors were soaked right through and yet the Slytherins were perfectly dry. Harry continued to circle the pitch searching for the snitch as Flint scored Slytherin’s fifth point.

It was as the Gryffindors took possession of the quidditch again that Harry came close to falling off his broom laughing. Finnegan was circling around the same goal post in mad pursuit as though he had caught sight of the snitch yet on closer inspection Harry realized that Finnegan was in fact chasing the reflection of Draco’s solid gold watch. Distracted as he was by the spectacle Harry was still able to spot the speck of gold as it flew past him.

With a huge burst of speed Harry took after the snitch. Dodging two bludgers, three chasers and Wood Harry finally managed to close his fingers around the snitch seconds after Adrian cleanly put away their

seventh point allowing Slytherin to win by an amazing two hundred and twenty points. Landing Harry found himself surrounded by the rest of his team who were all congratulating him on an excellent catch.

There was the usual party that night in the Slytherin Common Room although they broke up early that time as the team (who were tired from playing in such horrible conditions) left the party for bed and the rest of the house followed soon afterwards.

As the next few weeks flew by the order continued their training, working on new spells both silently and in some cases wandlessly. Professor Snape also continued to give them fortnightly lessons on occlumency as Remus did the same with his Patronus Charm lessons every other week.

Tonks and Kingsley also continued with their nightly lessons, although they were putting more of an emphasis on the physical part of training than they had before. Andromeda Tonks also visited once a month to refine the Costa's healing abilities as well as to give Arianna and Ginny some extra training.

The end of term drew nearer as did another Hogsmeade weekend. It was the perfect opportunity to go Christmas shopping and the younger students targeted the older students with shopping lists. Harry had two, one from Tyler and one from Luna. He was surprised when David gave his list to Neville.

"It's not that I don't want to give it to you but it'd ruin the surprise." The young Lupin smiled apologetically.

Accepting that logic Harry asked Arianna out again so that they could do their shopping together: Arianna was seeing to Ginny's list as well. They have gone out several times since their first Hogsmeade weekend and now considered themselves officially together.

The others were going with the same person save Terry and Anthony who had somehow swapped partners. Aside from Harry and Arianna the only other couple who were starting to get serious was Theo and Hermione. This surprised Harry greatly as he thought Theo still had feelings for Arianna. The only explanation he could come up with was

that Theo had planned the whole thing to make Harry aware of Arianna's feelings. After all one could never tell how much of the future Theo sees.

Hogsmeade passed much the same as it had the first time only they had a better sense of purpose this time. With all the Christmas shopping he did Harry was sure that his trust vault must be running on empty. Instead of carrying around actual moneybags Harry had keyed his wand to his vault so that he could withdraw money from it whenever he had need of it.

They ate at the same restaurant only this time they ate for free as Harry and Draco had brought the restaurant since their last visit. In addition to being able to eat for free they were also given the largest private room which turned out to be a good thing with the four twins present.

Dinner was rushed that night as they wanted to have enough time to see to their packing before their departure the following day. It took many neat-packing spells for Harry to fit all of his presents into his trunk and in the end he still had to leave several books behind. They settled into the heir's compartment that had expanded yet again, the Hufflepuff banner hanging brightly next to the other house banners.

They were all excitedly discussing their plans for the holidays save Remus, who sat in the corner working. Although they would all be spending Christmas with their own families Harry had arranged for them to all celebrate the New Year together at Evans Estate.

It took quite a bit of convincing to ensure they were all able to attend. The girls in particular had a hard time convincing their parents to allow them to attend. Considering the late hour of the party Harry had decided go ahead and make it a sleepover. It took a visit from Sara and Sirius to convince the worst of the mother, the other simply made sure that a female chaperone was present before agreeing.

The trip flew by them and they hadn't even realized they had arrived until they heard a knock on the door. They quickly packed their things away. Hannah, being the closest to the entrance opened the door to find David waiting for them. The young Lupin had decided to sit with

his friends for the trip. They all quickly filed out towing their luggage as they went.

On the platform they broke up and went to greet their parents and it was then that Harry paused in shock at the pretty brunette Remus had by his side. David ran into his older brother and paused as well, waving happily at the very person who had shocked Harry. Gathering himself Harry looked to David and put the pieces together, realizing who the lady was.

“Moony!” Harry nodded to Remus although it had barely been ten minutes since they last spoke.

“Pronglet, I’d like for you to meet David’s mother, Leila Wilkes.”

Leila curtsied as Harry bowed. “It’s nice to finally meet you Miss Wilkes.”

“Just call me Leila. It’s nice to meet you too Harry and thank you for inviting us over these holidays.”

Harry grinned, “It’s my pleasure, anything to keep David around.”

“Remus did say the two of you had become rather close.” Leila smiled with a nod before she gestured to a tall wizard standing nearby. “May I introduce my brother, Gary Wilkes?”

“It’s a pleasure Mr. Potter.” The man bowed with a smile, he had his sister’s curls and skin tone.

“The pleasure is all mine, I can assure you.” Harry returned the bow with one of his own.

Smiling at David’s uncle Harry stopped, he recognized those eyes and that nose. Blaise can you come here please?

“What’s up...?”

Blaise had just joined them but paused mid-sentence when he spotted Gary. Harry looked between the two and had to admit there was definitely a strong resemblance between the two.

“Blaise?” Gary looked shocked.

Before Blaise could respond Mrs. Zabini joined them. “Come Blaise, we have reserve...” She, too, broke off on sighting Gary.

“Gary?” She breathed.

“Angelique.” He nodded with a half-smile although he still looked shocked.

“Mother?” Blaise was still somewhat confused. Sure they had suspicions that David’s uncle could possibly be Blaise’s father, but suspecting it and seeing it was a different story.

“Yes Blaise, I would like for you to meet your real father, Gary Wilkes.”

“My...father?” Blaise turned to Gary with questioning eyes.

“Yes Blaise. I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you as I should have been. When we found out Voldemort was out to recruit us we had no choice but to hide.” Harry blinked, he was pleasantly surprised; not many people could openly say Voldemort’s name.

“Oh!” Blaise was shocked and couldn’t manage to put into words what he was feeling. He had doubted the possibility of his father being David’s uncle. It would have been too easy, too convenient.

Harry and David both clasped him on the shoulder. “Welcome to the family, cousin.” David said.

It took a while for Blaise to recover from the shock by which time the others had left and the platform had emptied considerably. Once Blaise’s mind had processed all of the new information he stepped forward smiling hopefully.

“So what now?” Blaise poised the question to his father.

“Well that depends on your mother. I’d like to become a part of your life now, especially with Leila moving out, I’ll have Wilkes Manor all to myself.”

“How about we discuss it over dinner?” Mrs. Zabini seemed happy to see Gary again.

Gary looked to Leila, who nodded, before he agreed to join the Zabinis for dinner.

“Well, we had better get going ourselves. Boys, you have your trunks?” Remus asked as they walked over to the fireplace.

Harry patted his pocket and nodded before he leaned casually against the fireplace as he let Leila floo out first. In a fit of boredom Harry, having mastered his sixth-year spells, floored to Potter Manor to collect books on channeling as he had been curious about the Halloween incident. And as he searched through his library Harry came across the journals of Wilfred Potter.

His great-grandfather explained how he created his own floo network and how it worked. Although the normal floo network required floo powder as a trigger for the connection to open, the Potter Network uses the blood of the Potter bloodline as a trigger.

Remus followed shortly after Leila before David headed through. Harry brought up the rear and they settled into their seats in the ‘family’ parlor. They had all been seated for about five seconds when Jade popped in with a tea tray. “Dinner will be served in an hour in the dining room if that is okay with you Master Harry.”

“Yes fine, although the others can take care of it. We’ve just returned you should rest for a while at the very least.”

“That’s okay, I like to work!” Jade grinned as she left with a curtsy.

Shaking his head Harry poured the tea and they discussed the coming year as they waited for Sirius and Sara to join them. The main topic of discussion was Sirius and Sara's wedding, scheduled to take place during the summer holidays.

"Leila!"

"Sara!"

As Sara entered the room the two women rushed to greet each other with a hug. Sirius stepped in behind Sara and collapsed into his usual seat. This time it was Remus' house elf, Catty, who had appeared with two extra cups. When Remus had been appointed Harry's 'full' guardian Parry had immediately assigned him a house elf of his own.

Sirius poured himself and his fiancé a cup of tea each as they waited for Sara and Leila. There was a high-pitched squeal coming from the other side of the room that had the wizards wincing. Leila was admiring the ring on Sara's finger babbling at a high speed.

"Girls!" David scowled into his tea cup.

Sirius smirked turning to Harry, "Speaking of girls...What's this I hear about you and a certain Ravenclaw?" Sirius raised an eyebrow at his god-son.

"I like her, she likes me, she's my girlfriend; end of story." Harry shrugged and tried to bury his red face in his teacup.

"End of story? No way!" Sirius sat up straight and leaned forward. "It took your father six year to even get a date with your mother and you manage it in a little over two year?"

"Well, yeah..."

"Maybe he takes after his god-father. You're not exactly one to beat around the bush." Remus smirked from his own armchair.

"I suppose..." Sirius trailed off thoughtfully.

“It’s different though. I was already good friends with Arianna. And Moony said mum hated dad until your sixth year.” Harry pointed out as his embarrassment faded.

“True.” Sirius conceded the point with a nod.

Blinky appeared a moment and announced that dinner was served. They proceeded to dinner which was a very boisterous affair; the four adults were happy to be together again and were laughing like there was no tomorrow.

Chapter 38: Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Harry and David spent the first few days of the Christmas holidays roaming the estate where Harry introduced David to Rogue and the other winged horses. David had found some new friends amongst the Welsh Greens as well as the horses. They also spent some time finishing their homework and doing some extra studying. Harry took David over to meet Dudley and his Aunt Petunia on Christmas Eve and the two boys became friends straight away.

It was finally Christmas Day and Harry was woken up early by an excited voice. "Harry! Wake up! It's Christmas!"

Harry laughed as he found his glasses and put them on. Slowly the dark shape that was his younger brother came into focus. "Okay, I'm coming."

David left first as Harry started to put his slippers on, he left his room pulling on his robe as he went. Yawning Harry picked up speed as the thought of presents invaded his sleep-hazy mind. Running down the stairs Harry overtook David at the first level and reached the large Christmas tree in the family parlor first.

Claiming the best seat by the fire Harry drew his wand, which he kept on him even when he slept, and cast a whistling spell. David came running into the room not long after and stopped in the doorway to catch his breath.

"How'd you get down here so fast?" David asked panting.

"Training," Harry smirked. "I'll start your training sometime soon if your mother agrees. Sit down, the others should be here soon and then we can get started."

David took a seat opposite Harry as Harry's sensitive ears picked up the sound of four adults coming down the stairs. Before they had even entered the room Harry could sense their annoyance at the early hour. Blinky popped in with a tea tray as Sirius stumbled over to his favorite armchair.

“Couldn’t you let an old man sleep in?” Sirius yawned and leaned back in his chair letting Sara settle in his lap.

“One, it is Christmas and two, you’re not that old!” Harry grinned as he reached for the first package.

Remus dropped into his own armchair whilst Leila moved towards Harry’s. Meanwhile Harry threw the first present of the day over to David. “Merry Christmas Dave! That’s from me and Ari.”

Harry watched as David nodded his thanks and proceeded to enthusiastically rip apart the green wrapping paper. He was so busy watching his brother open his present that Harry almost missed Sirius’ muttered comment, “They are already buying presents together!”

Slightly flushed Harry ignored his god-father and smiled as David’s face lit up. In his hands David held up a new broomstick that was not unlike the one Harry had. As much as Harry would have liked to get David the Firebolt he wasn’t sure how Leila would take it not knowing much about her.

After spending some time with her over the past couple of days Harry realized she had come from a similar background where money wasn’t a problem. Once David was done enthusiastically thanking him Harry picked up the next present and passed it to Leila. “This is from Sirius and Sara.” Leila delicately opened the wrapping to find a new purse.

And so, they went around until all but one present had been opened; Remus’ gift to Leila. They had all pulled in a good haul this year; Harry received a new Firebolt from his god-parents as well as a care-kit from Draco. There was the usual trade of sweets and books but the best surprise had been the pet snake David had given Harry. The venomous cobra had instantly taken a liking to Harry and was now sleeping around his neck.

“Moony, last present.” Harry grinned as he thought of the present Remus had in mind for his beloved. Remus had come to Harry with the idea a couple of months back and they had been planning this together for a while. Harry just hoped Leila liked it.

“Right.” Remus was a little nervous as he took out a small box from his pocket and he turned Leila around to face him.

Leila looked at Remus in confusion whilst Harry had to do some empathy manipulation to keep David from giving the surprise away.

“Leila, I know we haven’t been back together for very long but I can’t imagine spending my life without both you and David. Leila my love, will you marry me?” Leila started crying when she realized where Remus was going with his speech.

Speechless with happiness Leila couldn’t do anything but smile and nod. Grinning from ear to ear Remus gave her a tight squeeze. As Remus and Leila hugged Sirius and Sara were jumping up and down cheering as though they were at the world cup and England had just won.

David was also jumping down only he resembled a kangaroo more than the others. Harry, on the other hand, just smiled with happiness. He finally had a complete family of his own. Sure he would always love Aunt Petunia and Dudley and, to a much lesser extent (almost non-existent), Uncle Vernon it was nothing to having his own family.

After congratulating his new parents Harry gathered his presents and headed up to his leisure room to sort them out. David followed behind him as he headed for his own room in the guest wing. Although now that Leila and Remus were to be getting married and Leila and David would be moving in permanently David was going to need to be relocated.

The rest of the morning was spent sorting through their presents; Harry took some time to arrange his books in the correct order. After lunch the rest of the afternoon was spent outside, Harry managed to convince all of the adults to join them and the six witches and wizards

had fun playing in the snow. Leila and Sara made snow angels whilst the boys had fun in a huge snow fight where using magic was banned.

It was four in the afternoon and the sun was setting fast when Jade popped right into a snowball from Sirius to David. "Eh...pft...Master Harry..." Jade coughed and splattered as she tried to get the snow off of her. "Master Harry...it is time to get ready sir. You wanted me to remind you." Jade pattered down her skirt removing bits of melting snow.

"Oh right thank you Jade. I shall be in momentarily. Are you okay?" Harry asked with concern as he threw his snowball overhead to hit Remus in the face.

"Yes Master Harry. I am okay. I just need to change and then I shall return to my duties." Jade curtsied and popped out just as Remus returned Harry's snowball. Unthinkingly Harry reacted and waved the snowball towards his god-father.

Running Harry dogged two more snowballs before he made it inside. Harry took his time to have a shower and get ready. He was to pick up the Dursleys before dinner. It had taken quite a lot of convincing from both Aunt Petunia and Dudley before Uncle Vernon had finally agreed to attend Christmas dinner at Evans Estate.

Harry smirked as he spiked his hair, it had taken twelve years but Uncle Vernon was finally starting to see the benefits of having magic around. Especially with Mikky doing all the chores save the cooking thus allowing Aunt Petunia more time for Dudley as well as time to work.

The last thing Harry did before he left was strapping on his wand, he flooed over to Privet Drive and smiled when he saw his family waiting for him with the curtains drawn. Fighting laughter Harry nodded and quickly explained how the floo network worked. He gave them the address of Evans Estate before letting Aunt Petunia through first. Uncle Vernon followed her rather nervously before Dudley also flooed out.

Upon his arrival not long after Dudley had left Harry looked around and noticed Dudley and David greeting each other on one side. The adults however were a different story. Uncle Vernon looked ready to attack someone as he pushed Aunt Petunia behind him. And it wasn't hard to see why. Through the doorway of the formal parlor Leila and Sara were clearly visible with their wands out having just finished touching up the decorations. Sirius was also visible testing his new sword that Harry had brought him.

“Uncle Vernon! Please!” Harry stepped between the two groups as he beckoned for his family to join him. “I'd like for you to meet my god-parents Sara Nott and Sirius Black.”

They both executed the perfect bow/curtsy as they stepped into the small room. Harry noticed Aunt Petunia visibly relaxing having recognized the names.

“And this is Leila Wilkes; she's Remus' fiancé and David's mother.”

After another curtsy from Leila Aunt Petunia stepped around Uncle Vernon, much to his dismay, and returned a less than perfect curtsy. “It's nice to finally meet you all. Harry's told me so much about you I feel as though I know you already.” She smiled sincerely.

“Oh it's nice to meet you too. Would you like to join us? We were just about to sit down for tea.” Sara smiled easily.

When Aunt Petunia agreed the three ladies moved into the parlor as Sirius led a very nervous and somewhat frightened Uncle Vernon to Remus' parlor for drinks. Harry joined Dudley and David by the fireplace as they discussed their presents and Dudley was introduced to Hissy, Harry's snake.

It was another hour before the three personal house elves came to call them to dinner. Sirius' house elf was a slightly ill-tempered guy named Kreacher. When Sirius had first taken over the Black estate Kreacher had been somewhat vindictive to say the least (in fact, he had been downright nasty) however as time progressed Kreacher

slowly became more accepting especially when Sirius had announced his engagement with Sara.

When they had all met up in the dining room for dinner Harry could easily tell that the men have had more firewhiskey then they should have. But as it was Christmas Harry ignored it and pulled a slightly tipsy Remus into his chair, unlike the others Remus rarely drank.

It was a relaxed dinner and Harry made sure Remus got some solid food into his stomach even going so far as to remove his goblet from his reach. All in all it was a pleasant night and by night's end Uncle Vernon had become firm friends with both Sirius and Remus although Harry wasn't sure if that was the firewhiskey talking or not. Aunt Petunia, Sara and Leila had also become good friends over dinner and departed with many hugs and promises of letters.

The next couple of days passed in a blur as Harry and David prepared for the party on New Year's Eve. Now that Leila had agreed to move in with them permanently she had moved into Remus' wing and David had been given his own set of rooms in Harry's wing. Harry also went about starting David's training both magical and physical. David was introduced to football as well and Harry was pleasantly surprised to find how good his brother was at the sport.

It was the day before the party that Harry happened across Remus and Leila talking in the family parlor downstairs. Standing to one side of the doorway Harry listened in.

"It's not right Moony! He's not as strong as Harry! He's battered and bruised constantly!"

"Harry and the others were much the same at that stage. He'll be fine. They get stronger after a while."

"I still don't get why it is so necessary. I'm all for them doing their best but this goes way beyond that."

Harry heard Remus sigh and the rustle of silk as he waited trying not to breathe too loudly.

“You remember what it was like before...Harry may have weakened him for the moment but Voldemort is returning and soon. I won't have our son unprepared when that day comes. It is better for him to be exhausted now then dead later.”

Now it was Leila's turn to sigh. “I guess you're right. I just can't help but worry. The war that's coming, you're not joining Dumbledore like last time are you?”

Picking up on the apprehension in her voice Harry grinned, if she was nervous about joining Dumbledore then she shouldn't need too much convincing he thought.

“Well no, I've discovered so much about him since the first war that...I...no, I've got a new leader, one who I will follow to the very end.” Remus answered somewhat awkwardly.

“Who?” Leila asked fearfully.

“Me.” Harry smirked as he stepped into the room laughing internally as the two adults jumped in surprise.

“Pronglet! Can't you make some noise when you move around?” Remus scowled at his ward and almost-son.

“Um...no.” Harry smirked as he took his favorite seat.

“ Harry...you...you're...” Leila stuttered. Her shock was understandable; most people would not believe that fully grown wizards would answer to a thirteen year-old half-trained wizard even if he was the famous boy-who-lived.

“Yes, I've created my own side in this coming war.” Jade brought them tea and poured for them as Harry spoke. Seeing that Leila was about to say something Harry held up a hand to stop her. “Before you ask, yes, I have thought this through very carefully. Both Voldemort and Dumbledore have their own plans for where the wizarding world should be like after the war and it's not pleasant.”

“But Harry...you’re only thirteen...I mean compared to Dumbledore and Voldemort...” Leila trailed off as she tried to wrap her mind around what she had just been told.

Harry shrugged; it was not the time to tell her about the prophecy just yet. “I know they have more experience and all of that. Nonetheless I have beaten both of them before with some help and will do so again.” Harry took a sip of tea as he waited for Leila’s response.

“He’s not alone Leila, I’ll be right here beside him the whole time. Besides, he’s got the best of both James and Lily in him. Harry will win this war and return the wizarding world to the way it should be.”

Harry drank his tea in silence as he watched and waited. Remus was particularly nervous as he, too, drank his tea looking over the top at his fiancé. Finally Leila nodded having accepted their explanations. “I understand. You can count me in as well. I can tell how powerful are and I can see how intelligent and mature you are despite your age. So yes, I shall follow you. I also agree with Remus, you do have the best of both your parents in you.”

Grinning Harry nodded, “Thank you! I was hoping you would agree. Welcome aboard! We won’t be meeting for a while as things have been quiet but Remus will fill you in on everything.” Turning to his guardian Harry continued, “Inner circle I think, Moony.”

“Of course!” Remus nodded grinning with happiness, glad that he no longer had to keep secrets from his fiancé.

With a final nod Harry finished his tea and continued on his way to check on David in the Potions Lab. Before he had left the room Harry found himself stopped by Remus. “Thanks Harry!”

Smiling Harry shook his head, “No thanks needed.”

Harry returned to David to find him cleaning up having finished brewing the Swelling Solution he was working on. Grinning Harry tested the potion and nodded his approval, satisfied with its quality.

He grabbed the antidote and applied it before the swelling could get worse.

“Not bad, of course not up to Draco’s standard but very good nonetheless. Now let’s try dueling and see if you can remember how to block spells.”

They moved to the dueling chamber after they had finished cleaning up. There Harry drilled David in various first and second year spells, most of which he had already mastered. Harry measured David to be at the same level Draco was at the same age. However, David had the added advantage of being able to cast any spell he has already learned wandlessly.

“Stupefy!” Harry fired a low-powered stunner at David.

David’s eyes widened as the spell came hurtling towards him. Unable to block the weak stunner David was hit and crumbled to the floor. Harry came out of his thoughts as he realized that there was no way David could have blocked his spell. Cursing his stupidity Harry conjured a cushion just in time to stop David’s head from hitting the floor.

Harry rushed over and checked his brother over for injuries, he knew David was just learning how to duel and was not ready for a stunner no matter how weak it was. As he cast various diagnostic spells he cursed inwardly, David was far more tired and hurt than he let on. Cursing the Lupin stubbornness Harry woke his brother up, “Enervate.”

“Oh man! And I thought I was getting better!” David sat up with a groan.

“You are! That was my fault; I gave you a spell you are nowhere near ready for.” Harry gave David a reassuring pat on the back.

“Really? Are you sure? I know I’m nowhere near your level when you were my age.” David said with a pout rubbing his neck.

Harry laughed, "No one could be. I'm the descendent of three founders. If you're looking for a comparison try Draco, he was the best after me."

"But...you said I was beyond his level...except for at potions brewing..." David said in shock.

"Exactly!" Harry grinned with pride.

Whilst David came to terms with his potential Harry set about repairing the damage on the walls caused by their various spells. Of course the damage had been rather minor as neither had been using any advanced spells. That and the fact that the dueling chamber was spelled for easy repair meant that it wasn't long before Harry was done.

Harry gave David some time to read and rest whilst he went about ensuring all the rooms were prepared for his guests. There will be twenty of them including Harry and David, not to mention the adults. Unfortunately whilst bigger than the average home Evans Estate wasn't quite big enough to fit twenty-four people and so several of his friends were going to have to share rooms.

The twins, of course, shared rooms whilst Ginny and Luna had also decided to room together. Harry had asked the Potter house elves to come help as there weren't enough Evan house elves to deal with so many guests. As David rested and the adults worked Harry went about making sure there was enough food and drinks for the duration of his friends' stay.

The next day passed way too slowly for Harry's liking. Even though he was busy with some last minute preparations Harry was so excited that time seemed to just drag on. Finally the clock chimed eight and the first of his guests arrived. Draco, prompt as always, stepped out of the fire and clasped arms with Harry moments before Arianna arrived. Harry moved to kiss her on the cheek when she flinched unexpectedly.

“Harry...what’s that around your neck?” She asked looking at his neck with curiosity.

Looking down Harry spotted Hissy sleeping on his shoulder. He was so used to her presence that he sometimes forgot that she was sleeping there.

“Oh, this is Hissy; she’s my Christmas present from David.”

“Oh!”

Eyeing the snake carefully Arianna leaned over and gave Harry a kiss on the cheek. Harry received similar reactions from his friends minus the kiss. The only exceptions were Neville, who had brought the snake, and Hannah, who shrieked upon seeing the cobra and woke Hissy up. It took several minutes to calm both girls down whereupon they moved into the ballroom.

The house elves had helped him to rearrange the ballroom so that it resembled a large parlor; there was a nice fireplace, a Wizarding Television for them to watch the countdown, various armchairs and couches as well as a very large refreshment table that should keep even Blaise happy. The kids settled into their seats to talk about their Christmas and their presents.

Sara and Leila, however, were having a hard time convincing Remus and Sirius to stop working. Harry left to fetch Arianna a drink just as the girls were trying to force Blaise to tell them about what happened with his father. As he moved towards the refreshment table Harry happened to overhear a part of the adults’ conversation.

“Come on Remus! It is New Years’ Eve! You can work later, after tomorrow for instance. We haven’t passed a new year together since...”

“Leila, I’d love to, really, but I’ve got tons to do and Harry is forcing me to go to that stupid party.” As the new head of the Wizengamont Remus had finally been granted acceptance into elite society and so the Longbottoms had happily extended an invitation to Remus as well.

“Hey! I’ll have you know that Augusta Longbottom’s parties are not stupid!” Sara said indignantly. Whilst Mr. and Mrs. Longbottom had recovered from their illness they were still having a hard time adjusting to the fact that they had missed nearly twelve years of their life. Therefore Neville’s grandmother continues to take care of things for them.

“I shall probably agree with you afterwards, nonetheless it is time consuming and I have so much to do now what with Harry’s new house and that restaurant of his.” Remus rubbed his forehead wearily and Harry felt a jolt of guilt for giving Remus more work.

“Then why did you agree to it? As Regent and his guardian you have the right to refuse his purchases.” Sirius too set down his quill tiredly. The Black Lord had been working on an expansion project for Harry’s farm as well as expanding his interests overseas in case of an emergency.

Remus sighed, “I couldn’t say no. All this will be his in less than four years.” Remus gestured to the room at large. “And so far his decisions have been good. The farm is coming along brilliantly and that restaurant earns him a nice bit of profit. Although I don’t understand why he wants to limit the Hogsmeade lease to a yearly contract but...”

“I brought that place for a very specific reason and it wasn’t to hire it out to recent graduates. You may or may not know it but that cottage rests just outside the Hogwarts border close to the Forbidden Forest.” Harry decided to interrupt them just then having retrieved two butterbeers for both him and Ari.

Remus nodded, “I am well aware of that fact, however...”

“It also lies within ten miles of several secret escape passageways out of Hogwarts.” Harry continued as he took a seat, “should things get bad...” Harry shrugged.

There was a moment of silence as the adults took in the implications behind Harry's statement. Harry smiled and nodded as he left them to their work wanting to return to Arianna before her drink got warm. As he moved away he heard Remus comment. "He gets more and more like Lily every day. Sometimes I forget he is only thirteen, it's like he is already an adult in his own right."

Smiling Harry handed Arianna her drink and settled into his seat in time to hear Ginny vehemently defending England's chances in the Quidditch League that was coming up.

"Sorry Ginny! England may be good but it is France's turn this time!" Draco grinned excitedly.

They spent a good couple of hours arguing about which quidditch team was going to win. Although the finals weren't for another eight months or so the group already had a good idea of who would win largely thanks to Theo's foreseeing abilities.

Draco was so confident about France's chances that he was calling for a bet. Harry shook his head as he put five galleons on Ireland to win. Of course Harry supported the English team himself but he would never bet against Theo. His friend had never been wrong in his predictions yet and it is highly unlikely he would start being wrong now.

Fred and George happily took the bets and recorded them down. With that settled they talked of other things as they waited for the midnight countdown. Harry was interested to see what Neville and Blaise would do without Padma and Megan around. Not to mention Cedric who, as far as Harry could tell, had a strong crush on the beautiful Cho Chang.

The last few hours passed swiftly as they watched a replay of the Weird Sisters' last concert. At 11:55 the timer went off and Harry switched the channel with a flick of his wand so that they could watch the countdown go off at Diagon Alley.

With only a minute to go everyone stood and moved towards the one they wanted to kiss. Only Luna, Ginny, David, Neville, Blaise and Cedric hovered uncertainly.

“5...4...3...2...1...”

“Happy New Year!” Everyone cheered loudly.

Harry turned to Arianna and gave her their first real kiss on the lips. It barely lasted more than a couple of seconds but Harry had never felt so happy in his life. The kiss had made him feel all warm inside; he felt like he could produce the best patronus yet with this one memory. Looking at the others Harry snickered, everyone was laughing at the sight of Cedric giving David a very elaborate but fake kiss.

His curiosity got the better of him and Harry turned to see Blaise holding hands with Luna smiling like an idiot whilst a very red Neville pointedly avoided looking at the equally embarrassed red-head beside him. Shaking his head Harry tried to distract them by suggesting a display of fireworks to bring in the New Year.

It worked better than he thought it would. Fred and George immediately agreed bringing out their entire stock of fireworks which included some store bought ones as well as their own self-made ones. As Harry watched two separate fireworks they came together to produce a large dragon made up of green and silver sparks.

Smiling with happiness Harry looked at Draco who caught his eyes and nodded. The two had numerous business plans for when they were able to start trading and funding Fred and George's future joke shop was definitely on the list. Although technically they weren't supposed to start trading until they were seventeen and are of age their parents/guardian were letting them start early.

Draco wasn't allowed to start trading until he was fifteen and Remus was going to give Harry full control in less than a year on his fourteenth birthday. Both Mr. Malfoy and Remus had decided that with the war coming both boys were more than likely to inherit their estates early.

It was another hour or two before they all retired in very high spirits. The boys claimed one last kiss before heading to their rooms. Harry had arranged things so that the boys were all on one level and the girls were on another. After all he didn't want the mothers to be coming after his blood.

Chapter 39: Announcements

The next morning they all slept in until Jade woke Harry with the news that Bill Weasley was in the formal parlor awaiting his presence. Groaning Harry rolled over and looked at the new clock hanging on his wall. Noon. Turning Harry spotted Jade, who waited nearby for her instructions.

“Thank you Jade! Please inform Mr. Weasley that I shall be with him momentarily. In the meantime could you offer him some tea?”

“Of course, Master Harry! It has already been taken care of.”

Jade bowed and popped out of the room as Harry proceeded to get changed. It wouldn't do for him to receive visitors in his night clothes. Ten minutes later Harry entered the parlor to find Bill and Remus already talking.

“Bill! How lovely to see you. Is there any particular reason you are visiting us today?” Harry yawned as he dropped into his seat.

“Harry.” Bill nodded. “So sorry to be disturbing you but mother insisted. She's worried about Ginny.” He rolled his eyes and took another sip of his tea.

Harry chuckled good-naturedly and nodded, “Of course, I believe she is still asleep. Jade.” Harry paused as Jade popped into the room. “Is Ginny awake yet?”

“No, Master Harry. None of your guests have stirred yet although Master David is already on his way down.”

“Thank you, could you wake Ginny up for me please? And could we get lunch in the dining room...say in...half-an-hour.” Harry turned to Bill. “Would you like to join us?”

“Sure, I guess.” Bill shrugged.

“Great! Jade, inform the others to set up a place for Bill as well.” Harry smiled at his house elf and friend.

“It shall be done. Would you like the elves to wake your other guests in time for lunch?”

“That would be great! In fact, why not wake them now so they have enough time to clean up before we eat.” Harry suggested.

Jade bowed again and popped out. Harry sighed and reached for his cup of tea that Jade had poured for him. Unfortunately it was a bit beyond his reach and so he was forced to levitate it towards him. “So how goes things? You’re not still living at the Borrow are you? I thought you had planned to move out with Charlie a while back.” Harry asked as he sipped his tea.

“Yes, that was the plan but we are having a hard time finding a suitable place to live.”

Harry contemplated his friend’s problem as David walked in and poured a cup of tea for himself. “Oh! I know! My Hogsmeade house! It’ll be more than big enough for the two of you! And if you split the lease...” Harry trailed off as he thought about it. Not only would it be convenient to have Bill close by it would also help if they ever needed to use the house as an emergency getaway.

“Harry, what about the Scamander kid?” Remus asked as he finished his tea.

“He’ll understand, we hadn’t signed the release yet. It’s still at the negotiating stage. We’ll just say we got a better offer. You know it’s not legal until the contract’s been signed and all.”

Remus nodded, “Alright, I’ll contact Jefferson and have him prepare the necessary documents.”

Harry held up a hand, “Wait up! Aren’t we getting ahead of ourselves here? I mean, we have to ask Bill here for his opinion and then we

need to approach Charlie with the idea.” Harry turned to ask Bill what he thought just as Ginny entered the room.

“Approach Charlie about what?” Ginny yawned as she dropped onto the couch David was already sitting on.

“ They were talking about your brothers moving out.” David explained as he handed Ginny a fresh cup of tea.

“Thanks, yeah, I remember Charlie talking about it.” Ginny paused to take a sip of her tea. “So why did you all wake me for? Luna and I had a late night.”

“ Your brother here needed to check on you.” Harry smirked, purposely forgetting to mention that it was on her mother’s orders that Bill was there. He leaned back in his chair and took a sip of his tea as he waited for Ginny’s temper to flare. Ginny’s temper was second only to his own but was more enjoyable to watch as she did not have his control.

“BILL!!” Ginny screeched loudly.

The two Lupins both tried, unsuccessfully, to hide their smirks whilst Bill turned pale white and sank deeper into his chair. “I...mum...asked...” Bill stuttered.

“Oh fine. I don’t blame you. But mum...” Ginny relaxed enough to stop yelling but her eyes were still narrowed in anger as she thought of getting back at her mother. It was at this point that the others came running in.

“What happened? We heard...” Draco collapsed into one of the few remaining armchairs breaking off when he caught sight of Ginny’s face. “Never mind...” Things were silent with everyone fighting to wake up fully.

Blaise was the first to speak, “So when do we eat?”

That did it and everyone started laughing. It was an ongoing joke within their group; they all constantly teased Blaise about the amount of food he ate.

“Lunch shall be in...fifteen minutes.” Harry consulted the clock in the corner of the room. “Is that soon enough for you, Mr. Zabini?” Harry asked sarcastically.

Blaise looked like he wanted to say something but refrained at the last minute. Theo and Neville both looked up at that point and turned to Blaise with surprise showing in their eyes. Harry too sensed the warring emotions coming from Blaise but refrained from commenting silently asking Neville and Theo to keep quiet as well. Whatever it was Blaise would tell them when he was ready.

Conversation from then on was light as most of the group had yet to awaken fully and everyone was too hungry to think of anything but food. Jade called them to lunch and not long after they sat down did things pick up as dishes were passed around. The rest of the adults joined them part-way through the meal and they had an enjoyable time discussing the most random topics possible.

As soon as lunch was done the Weasleys packed up and left. Fortunately Ginny was in a better mood and gave them all one last smile before stepping into the fire. Slowly the others left as well one by one, or two, as was the case with the Costa twins and Draco and Arianna. Finally Harry was left alone with his family and he dropped into his armchair with a sigh.

“Well that was fun!” Harry grinned tired but happy.

“Yes, that was fun.” Remus smiled proudly. “You did well, a natural host you are. You take after your grandmother.”

Harry smiled and was about to reply when Sirius spoke up from his own armchair. “Hey Harry, I’ve got me a question about your bet. Why five Galleons? I mean, most of your friends only bet one or two.”

Harry smirked, "if there is one thing I've learned in the last year it is that you should never bet against Theo."

"He tipped the Ireland did he?" Sirius asked.

"Yeah, Ireland to win but Bulgaria to catch the snitch." Harry recalled Theo's prediction that day when they had been studying together in the library.

"Interesting..." Sirius trailed off.

Harry just grinned and leaned back in his chair relaxing. The Longbottom party was in two days and they were to return the day after which meant Harry had a lot of work to do in between. Just as Harry drifted off a voice woke him up.

Harry!

Sitting bolt upright Harry looked around the room to find everyone had left and the house elves had cleared away the tea tray. Standing he stretched, yawned and then headed for his study. Who is it?

Fred!

And George!

We need your help; mum and Ginny are at it again.

Only this time it is much louder and angrier...ouch!

Man can Ginny yell, anyway,

Mum's trying to keep Ginny from going to the party

But dad's insisting that we go

And we're not sure the house can stand that long

Also, Bill and Charlie wanted to talk to you

Yeah, something about some house

Harry smirked as he sat down at his desk. Right, tell them I'll talk to Charlie as soon as we get back to Hogwarts.

Sure will do. The twins said in unison.

There was silence as Harry retrieved his Charms homework and started reading it over.

Wow, it's quiet. I think dad won.

Yeah, it looks like it.

Guess we will see you there Harry.

Harry frowned over his essay as he edited out any mistakes he found. Oh right, see you guys.

The rest of the day was spent finishing his homework and that night was spent with David in the games room having fun. The next two days were spent in the dueling chamber as Harry continued his own training as well as David's.

On the day of the party the Lupin family went shopping along with Harry to purchase new dress robes for that evening. Leila's robes were outdated as it had been years since she had attended such a party, Harry had grown out of his from last year and Remus and David had never had dress robes of their own.

Therefore, they spent the majority of the morning at Madam Malkin's after which the family split up and went their separate ways. Remus went to Gringotts to see to some business whilst Leila went about visiting some old friends and the boys visited the apothecary to stock up on their potions ingredients.

The four of them met up for lunch at the Leaky Cauldron before returning to Evans Estate to prepare for the party. They had a quick dinner at home before they were ready to go. Upon arriving at

Longbottom Estate Harry led his family over to greet the Longbottoms just as the Greengrasses had finished.

Harry was about to introduce Remus and Leila to Mrs. Longbottom only to find they had already met. Neville's parents were also happy to see Remus and Leila once again and they immediately dragged the reluctant couple off to meet others from their school days.

Shaking his head with a smile Harry dragged David away along with Daphne who had just bid her older brother farewell and was waiting for them. They met up with the others in Neville's parlor and chatted for a while amongst themselves before they headed out to join the main party.

Instead of keeping to themselves as they usually did the order went about meeting new people. Daphne introduced her older brother, Alexander, and they also met his girlfriend who was coincidentally Theo's sister, Alison. The two of them joined the group for a while as did some of their friends in the outer circle.

Harry also had to spend some time being introduced to the other members of the Wizengamot whom he had yet to meet. He smiled tightly as he nodded and tried to file their names and faces away for future reference. Finally Harry was allowed to return to his friends and they chatted for a couple of minutes before deciding to try their hand at dancing once again.

However, they were interrupted by an announcement as they found their chosen partners. Mrs. Longbottom was standing on a raised platform, "I hope you are all enjoying yourselves this evening. Before we start the dancing again I have some things to say. First, I would like to congratulate Lord Sirius Black and Lady Sara Nott on their engagement." She paused politely as the room applauded, some more cheerfully than others. "Secondly, congratulations to Regent Remus Lupin and Lady Leila Wilkes on their engagement. And last but not least, another engagement between Lord Garrett Wilkes and Lady Angelique Zabini. Thank you that is all."

Harry and his friends paused with shock, clapping mechanically as they turned to Blaise. Harry, Neville and Theo were the least

surprised because they already knew he was hiding something but they were still annoyed that he hadn't told them.

"Surprise." Blaise grinned, seeing the shock on his friend's faces he knew it was worth his silence.

What he didn't see coming though was the point when his friends recover. Theo, Harry and Neville watched with amusement as Blaise was bombarded with questions. It was a while before the girls had settled down enough for a dance.

Harry led Arianna out onto the dance floor glad that he had taken the time out of his busy schedule to get some practice. The others partnered each other save for David, who was proclaiming the whole thing stupid, and Cedric who had asked a Ravenclaw, Su Li. They swapped partners every dance or two and by night's end everyone had dance with one another.

They were having so much fun that they didn't even realize how late it was until their parents came to get them. They said goodbye reluctantly even knowing that they would see each other on the train the next day. Harry and David followed Remus and Leila home and collapsed straight into bed after making sure the house elves knew to wake them in the morning.

The next morning there was a mad scramble as the three of them returning to Hogwarts rushed to pack their trunks. And before they knew it they were back at Hogwarts getting ready for the first day of term. Things picked up quickly and Harry and his friends were soon back at quidditch training, classes, studying and their extra classes with Professor Snape and Remus.

Unfortunately they also had to deal with the rest of the school and their reactions to the three engagements. It had taken a flat out order from Harry before the other students would back up and leave Blaise and David alone from all the questions. After that things settled down quickly. Harry soon realized that he had forgotten to start Hannah, Susan and Cedric on their animagus training and saw to it that they had lessons with Professor Snape, Draco or himself.

It would have been his first preference to have the twins help with the training but they were too busy preparing for their O.W.L.s and they were also starting to work on their plans for their joke shop. Harry smirked when the twins told him of their plans, they still did not know how they were going to get enough money to start the business but figured once Mia and Cara were of age they could use their inheritance and pay them back later.

Harry was almost a walking zombie within the first week back and decided he needed to cut back on something. He had already come close to mastering the Patronus Charm and figured he could continue on his own. So he dropped his lessons with Remus as he also had to spend some time arranging the lease for his Hogsmeade home.

//Flashback//

Blaise and Harry were arguing about their latest Transfiguration essay as they made their way outside to their first Care of Magical Creatures class of the term. Crabbe and Goyle were chatting with Justin and Ernie about their summer and Susan and Hannah were reading as they walked. They have upped their studies to a new level and Susan, Hannah, Terry, Anthony and Ginny were now the ones responsible for the prank war against Dumbledore.

They reached the clearing and sat down to wait for Charlie to arrive. Unlike their first lesson last term they were sitting together as a group chatting as they were still several minutes early. Finally Charlie arrived and began their lesson on Salamanders. As the others went about collecting wood and studying the creatures Charlie drew Harry aside to talk about the Hogsmeade house.

“Now Harry, both Bill and I have discussed your offer and we would love to lease your Hogsmeade home. Of course we do have to discuss the details like dates, amount and so on.”

“Great!” Harry grinned as he retrieved his parchment and quill to take some notes. They agreed on a date with little fuss as well as the splitting of duties but when it came down to the rent they argued for the remainder of the lesson. Charlie was against taking charity as he

called it and Harry didn't feel it was necessary for his friends to pay so much.

In the end they had to ask Blaise for his opinion and he settled it with a compromise of an in between price. Nodding, Harry noted it down and Charlie wrapped up the lesson, "Alright all of you. I want a foot long essay on the Salamanders to be handed in next lesson."

As the others left Harry and Blaise remained behind for a moment, "I'll have Remus contact our solicitor to set up the lease contract. When that's done we'll get Bill up here to finish it off." Harry nodded and they shook hands once more before Harry and Blaise left for lunch.

//End Flashback//

Harry smirked as he remembered Blaise's annoyance at missing out on 'valuable eating time'. He sighed and put away his essay before joining his friends on their way to meet Professor Snape for their fortnightly Occulmency lesson. They had all been progressing slowly but steadily, Harry and Draco were the furthest along followed by the four twins.

Chapter 40: How to Deal with a Toad.

With the weather still nice and warm the order found themselves outside yet again. Only this time instead of physical training or football games they were engaged in a friendly game of quidditch. Harry had just beaten Cedric to the snitch yet again when he saw a wolf patronus coming from the Hufflepuff tunnel. Calling the game to a stop Harry dropped down to see Remus and David running towards him.

“Hey dad, what’s the matter?” Harry asked as the rest of the team touched down beside him.

“It’s...Umbridge...she...” Remus paused to catch his breath as David stepped forward and continued.

“She’s trying to be appointed as an overseer of the Hogwarts’ curriculum but it’s obvious she’s doing just to get to you and dad. She’s called a session for tomorrow morning when classes start. She clearly doesn’t want either of you there.” David winced as he felt a strong wind picking up his robes.

“That...person...” Harry muttered angrily till Arianna came over and rested her hand on his shoulder. Looking over his shoulder Harry gave her a grateful smile calming down slowly.

“Right so, Anthony, Terry and Hermione...I’ll need...”

“Information, right. We’re on it.” Terry nodded and led the other two inside.

“Neville, Theo, Blaise and Daphne.”

“Yes!” They stepped forward.

Harry smirked, “The usual, please. Nev, write up some speeches for us.”

“Done.”

The four of them left as the others gathered around Harry waiting for their orders. Harry had to pause for a moment to think things through.

“Okay, Remus. We’re going to need the help of the adults in this so can you contact the rest? Let’s say we meet after dinner, so at...eight maybe. Draco, Susan, Hannah can you co-ordinate with them? We need to meet in one of the larger rooms as there are so many of us.”

They nodded and the four of them left. Arianna, David, Ginny, the twins, Luna and Cedric were now left.

“Alright, you four.” Harry turned to the twins. “I need you guys to hold the fort here whilst the rest of us are gone. Also, the adults will be needing maps to get from Professor Snape’s rooms to...let’s say...the indoor court.”

The four of them saluted in their usual manner before heading for the Gryffindor sitting room, which was their dominion.

“Now, Umbridge is bound to have some weaknesses of her own. I need you to find out what they are. Anything you can get on her would be helpful.” Harry addressed Cedric. “Arianna and Ginny will be helping you. Look for those with parents high up in the Ministry.”

They too left after Arianna had given Harry a kiss on the cheek. Only Luna and David were left now.

“Luna...do you know what time the Daily Prophet prints their morning edition?”

“Late, I think it’s around mid-night. They stop accepting articles an hour before print.”

“Great! Can you start writing a couple of articles on Hogwarts? Just saying stuff about how great Hogwarts is at the moment and something about our history. Also, once Cedric has enough information on Umbridge I’ll need you to write articles discrediting her.”

“It is done!” Luna smiled and skipped off. She had always enjoyed writing.

Harry and David proceeded to clean up the clearing. They had just put all the balls back into the box when Harry’s galleon heated up.

Harry here, what up?

Hey, it’s Draco. We need to know where you want to meet tonight.

We’ll meet in the indoor court. Get Remus to tell the others that they should floo into Professor Snape’s office. The twins shall map there for them. Also, remind Remus that disillusionist charms are essential.

Alright, thanks.

With David helping him Harry moved all of the equipment back into their storeroom. After shrinking his broom and pocketing it he led David back to the common room. There he gave David the choice of doing his work or helping the researchers. Sitting cross-legged in his armchair Harry cleared his mind and then reached for Irene’s presence in his mind.

Hey Irene!

Yes Harry, I heard your brother and Remus talking. What do you need?

I should have known that you would already know. Can you show me what Dumbledore is up to?

He’s in his study, I’ll show you.

Thanks!

Harry prepared himself as Irene transported him into Dumbledore’s office. Seeing the headmaster pacing and muttering to himself Harry moved closer.

“...must get rid...”

“...but how...”

“...damn Potter...”

“...need majority...”

“...Umbridge...follows Malfoy...”

“...Potter...too much control...”

“...already stole...”

“...no one left...”

Having gathered enough information to guess what Dumbledore was planning Harry was about to ask Irene to let him go. As he turned away from Hogwart's headmaster he came face to face with Fawkes, the phoenix.

“Hello young Gryffindor. I see you've discovered your heritage earlier than your forefathers.”

Harry paused and looked at the firebird. “Good afternoon, Fawkes. What makes you so certain that I am a Gryffindor?”

“You are the spitting image of your grandfather who was my last rightful companion. Were it not for the fact that your grandfather had died early I would have served your father as well. I've served the heirs of the Gryffindor line since Godric, himself, rescued me from some foolish muggles who wanted to study me when I was young.”

“Okay, then what are you doing with the headmaster?”

“When I say your grandfather died early, I mean he was murdered, by the one you call Voldermort. I had tried to save him but I was hit

and whilst I was being reborn the Headmaster stole me and bound me to this office. I can't leave unless I am with him."

"I...but...how?" Harry stammered in shock. Before Fawkes could answer him Harry felt his necklace heat up.

Irene let him go and Harry found himself back in his own body. He opened his eyes and noticed that David had disappeared. Leaving it for the moment Harry answered.

Harry, here. What's up?

Harry! We have a problem. Can you come to Professor Snape's office now?

Sure. I'll be there soon.

After taking a moment to mentally rework his plan Harry left for the dungeons. When Harry stepped out from behind one of Professor Snape's bookcases he noticed several people had jumped. Half of Remus' followers were there, most of the adult inner circle anyway.

Laughing at the adults in the room Harry dropped into one of the empty chairs beside Draco.

"So, what's the problem?" Harry asked looking to Remus as the leader of the adults.

"Malfoy and Nott here are both unable to actively oppose Umbridge. They'd risk blowing their cover." Remus said in a matter-of-fact kind of voice.

"Yes, I've had a thought about it and have decided that letting Umbridge in might be useful..." Harry held up his hands for silence as he was bombarded with arguments from all sides. "...I know! However, Dumbledore is against her coming and I'd like to hurt him a bit. Besides, between all of us here I'm sure we can...steer her in the right direction."

The silence dragged out for several minutes as the others thought about what it could mean. Waiting for them Harry pulled out his book bag and started reading. Harry was grateful that Ginny had unearthed that ancient shrinking charm. Sure, it had taken him weeks to master it but it had been worth it. Now he was able to carry his book bag with him wherever he went.

“Um...Harry?” Harry looked up at the sound of his god-father’s voice.

“Yeah?” Harry asked putting his book away.

“How do you know you can control her? She’s Fudge’s woman before anything else.”

“And who’s to say Fudge will be in any position to tell her what to do next year?”

Draco, Remus and Professor Snape all smirked as they knew Harry has had plans to replace Fudge for a long time.

“But will the new Minister be able to control her any better, or would he want to?” Sara asked.

“I believe she will, yes. Even Umbridge knows not to cross her.” Harry smirked thinking that the toad deserves what was coming to her.

“Madam Bones?” Professor Snape asked amazed at his favorite student’s ability to plan things out so perfectly.

“But of course.” Harry grinned.

Clearing his throat Remus called for the attention of the room. “Okay, so I believe we should still meet tonight at eight to work on this new plan. And maybe the students should get started on this course?” He looked to Harry for his agreement.

“Yeah, that sounds good. Draco and I will contact the others to tell them of this. Mr. Malfoy, Mr. Nott, Sara, Sirius, could you guys work on getting anything on Umbridge.”

Everyone agreed and most of the adults took their leave. Remus and Professor Snape were the only adults left.

“Susan, Hannah. It’s time to work on gathering more supporters for the outer circle. Talk to some of the Gryffindors and Ravenclaws to start with. Cedric and I will handle the Slytherins and Hufflepuffs.”

The two girls nodded and headed for the door. That left Harry, Draco, Remus and, obviously, Professor Snape.

“Okay. Remus, we have some things to talk about. But that’s going to have to wait. I’ll meet you in your office after I have re-organized the order. Speaking of which, have you guys decided on a name for your group?”

The two professors grinned at one another; it was amazing how close they had become. “We were thinking of the Order of the Wolf. Seeing as how you’ve got your order and Dumbledore has his. Now, I have mine.”

“Also, the reference to the wolf...will keep people wondering. The order of the phoenix, or yours, the order of Hogwarts, it’s obvious what it’s referring to.”

“The order of the Wolf you shall be. Now, Draco and I have quite a lot to do so we’ll catch you later.”

With a nod Harry left with Draco right behind him. As they walked back to the common room Harry opened his connection with the rest of the order.

Hey guys! Change of plans. Researchers, twins, Cedric, Ari and Ginny, you guys will be continuing with what you are doing now. Planners and Luna, can you guys meet me in the common room? Oh yeah, and has anyone seen David?

Terry here, David's been helping us, do you need him?

No, that's fine. Just teach him as much as you can for me, please.

Harry closed the connection as he stepped into the common room. It was no surprise to see the planners were already seated waiting for him.

"Hello, so sorry to do this to you. I'll need to keep her out of Hogwarts for the rest of the year at the very least. The plan is to allow her to come in later with the reasoning that the school year is almost over. I also plan on having Madam Bones replace Fudge before the start of the next term."

"Yeah, just one. How are you planning on controlling her?" Daphne asked.

"Blackmail mostly but once Madam Bones is in things will be much easier. So, your first task will be finding a way to postpone Umbridge's entrance into Hogwarts. Second, start planning ways to slowly discredit Fudge and promote Madam Bones."

"Piece of cake!" Neville stood smiling and headed for the library with the others following wordlessly.

Just as the Ravenclaw banner fell down behind Blaise the front entrance opened and Luna came rushing in.

"I'm sorry I'm late!" she said as she tried to regain control of her breathing.

"It's no problem. I was actually hoping that you could help the researchers. I don't think we'll be needing those articles just yet."

"Of course!" Luna headed for the Library.

“Draco, can you help Remus?” Harry asked turning to his best friend who had been silent the whole time. “I’m going to need to co-ordinate with them as I go.”

“Sure! I’ll talk to you soon.”

And with that Draco left the room to return to Professor Snape’s office. It took Harry a moment to gather his thoughts before he too left the room. Heading for the library to check on the researchers Harry was contacted yet again.

Hey Harry, sorry to disturb you. I was just wondering what you thought about potentially adding another person to the order.

It depends on who it is. It would be good have a round 20 members.

Harry smirked as he neared the end of the passageway.

Well, I think she would be a good addition to our team. Her parents are fairly high up in the ministry and she’s smart and resourceful...

She? You wouldn’t be talking about the gorgeous Cho Chang, would you?

Ever since Harry had discovered Cedric’s feelings for the famously beautiful Cho Chang he had put his watchers on her. And although she was a little superficial Harry ultimately found her to be worthy of their group. A couple of weeks under the tuition of Arianna and the Costa twins should turn her around. After all, Arianna had been responsible for teaching both Ginny and Hermione.

How did you...? Cedric’s mind-voice stuttered as his thoughts shattered.

Very obvious once one takes into account my empathy skills as well as your tendency to watch her like a hawk whenever she is in the same room as you.

By this point Harry was seated between the two Ravenclaw boys as they briefed him on their findings thus far. Harry listened with a half-ear as he awaited Cedric's response.

So...does this mean you approve? Cedric's mind-voice was filled with hope.

Yes... Harry winced at Cedric's mental cheering. ...However, she will be subject to Draco's standard questioning before she can be initiated.

Oh, of course! When can we ask her?

I would've liked to wait until after tomorrow's business has finished but I can tell see how much you want this. Besides it would be good to have another person holding the fort here.

So tonight?

I think we can manage that. Have her meet us in the Entrance Hall at six.

Will do! Thanks Harry! You won't regret this!

Harry closed the connection hoping that Cedric was right.

A/N: Hey all! The Dumbledore poll is down as of now!

Here are the results:

--

The Order takes him down, he gets sent to Azkaban and someone else takes over as Headmaster. 19

He is discredited and leaves Hogwarts, runs away and lives somewhere in the countryside or overseas with his brother. 7

One of the Death Eaters put him under the Imperius Curse and they control him. 4

He is left alone, still headmaster with some degree of control over the wizarding world. 3

--

So I guess it's official! Dumbledore will be taken down and chunked in prison. But that won't be happening for a couple of chapters yet. Now onto other stuff, the Umbridge stuff is expanding more than I thought it would, I just keep adding bits to it. For this chapter they are still in the preparation stage but I think we should reach the actual confrontation in the next chapter.

I've also changed their mind-speech parts to bold font rather than italics cause I found it hard to distinguish. I won't be editing the previous chapters until I have time though. So yes, here goes the next chapter! We 'meet' Cho!

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Chapter 41: How to Deal with a Toad - Part 2

After his conversation with Cedric Harry proceeded to give his full attention to Terry, who was explaining the benefits of having an overseer to further undermine Dumbledore's authority.

“Good work! Can you pass all of that onto the planners please?”

“Already done! We made a couple of copies and had David pass one of them to Remus and we’ve got a spare copy for you as well.” Anthony said.

“Great! And the original?”

“Hermione’s filing it away now.” Luna added, dispelling Harry’s suspicions that she was too engrossed in her reading to listen to them.

“Okay, well it seems like you’re all done. You can carry on with your own stuff now. Thanks guys!”

“Research!” Terry grinned. “Thanks Harry!”

Within moments Harry was left at the table, all by himself as the other three rushed off to continue their research on ancient spells. He was about to contact Neville to see how his team was doing when Hermione returned from the storeroom. Without even saying a word Harry simply pointed at the shelves where the others were retrieving the books they needed.

Neville! Harry called for his other best friend even as he took out his books.

Hey Harry! You need an update?

You know me well.

Neville, then, proceeded to tell Harry all about their plans and Harry had to admit it was well put together. Once the explanations were done Harry gave them his approval to make enough copies of the plan for everyone concerned. Harry also informed Neville of who he needed speeches for.

Barely having written a sentence after letting the connection go Harry was faced with the return of his younger brother.

“Hey Harry! Where are the others?” He asked happily dropping into a nearby chair.

“They are researching; they should be around the back somewhere. But I want you to do your own work. I won’t have you falling behind.” Harry added sternly erasing a word from his essay with a flick of his wand. Even though David was way ahead of the other first-years Harry kept pushing him.

“But Harry!” David whined. “I wanted to help!”

“No! Go finish your homework! And practice your spells!” Harry looked up from his essay to glare softly at David.

“Oh fine! But can you get my book bag for me?” David sighed giving up.

Harry dropped his eyes back to his work and nodded. Waving his arm without looking up he summoned the asked for bag. A minute later David’s bag came hurtling into the room heading straight for Harry. David easily levitated his book bag to keep it from hitting his beloved older brother. Landing it on the table beside himself David proceeded to see to his Transfiguration homework.

They worked in silence for a while Harry checking on David every once in a while and correcting his wand movements or his pronunciation. Half-an-hour later Harry had finished checking over all of his essays and he packed up calling out to Draco at the same time.

Hey Draco! Where are you at?

Harry, my brother! I think we are almost ready. McGonagall just needs to know who needs to be excused tomorrow. Oh, and Remus needs to know where the meeting is going to take place.

Alright, the meeting shall be in the ballroom. The twins are working on the maps. They will be ready by the time the adults get to Snape’s office. As for tomorrow, we don’t need all of us there. Neville, Arianna,

Luna, Anthony, Blaise and myself, obviously. Just the six of us should do it. I'm going to need the rest of you to takenotes for us and to help the twins with security.

I think McGonagall should be able to arrange that. I'll see you at dinner.

Oh yeah, I forgot to mention, Cedric's got us a new recruit. So meet us at six, Entrance Hall.

Really? Wouldn't happen to be Cho would it?

Yeah, that's the one. I think she'd be a good addition and besides once she's in maybe we can get Cedric to concentrate on he's work.

True, okay, I'll be there.

Later!

Harry closed the connection and started reading one of Salazar's diaries that Anthony had passed him. I was written in Parseltongue which meant no one else could read it.

Harry!

Hey George! What can I do for you?

We've finished with the maps and were wondering where you need them.

Fred. Bring them back here; I'll look them over before I pass them across. You guys go see to your studies.

Aye, aye Captain!

Harry smirked at the Costa twin's comment and turned back to his book. He had reached the entries about his ancestor's early days at Hogwarts. He was so engaged in his reading that Harry didn't even notice when the twin quartet entered the room with their book bags.

“Hey Harry!”

Fred spoke loudly into Harry’s right ear making the Slythering jump. His ear still stinging Harry gave all four twins his death glare.

“Thanks guys! Once I get my hearing back I’m going to get you back for this.”

Their eyes widened in fear as Mia dropped the maps down in front of him.

“Sorry! Won’t happen again!” Cara whispered fearfully as though she was somehow responsible for her boyfriend’s actions.

“Well it had better not! Now go study! I don’t want to be held responsible if you fail your O.W.L.s.” Harry said, his ear slowly starting to heal.

Reaching for the stack of maps in front of him Harry quickly counted them. Having made sure there were enough copies for all of the visiting adults he went through them again checking each one for both route and destination.

“Hey David, keep working on those new spells Terry wrote up for you. Watch your wrists movements and pronounce everything carefully. I’ll be back sometime before dinner and we’ll go down together. Guys watch him for me, will you?”

By that point the library had filled up considerably. All the teams had finished their tasks and were starting to trickle in with their book bags. In fact, nearly the entire was there save Blaise, Ginny and Draco. Those present acknowledged Harry’s question with either a thumbs up or a quick nod of the head.

“Thanks!”

Passing Arianna on his way out Harry gave her a quick kiss and waved the heavy books she was carrying onto her desk.

“I’ll be back soon.” He smiled at her affectionately.

Five minutes later he pushed aside Professor Snape’s bookshelf and entered his Head of House’s office. “Hello Professors, Remus, Drake.”

Harry dropped into a random chair and handed the maps to Professor Snape who was seated next to him.

“A little gift from the twins for our visitors.”

“Well that would make things easier.” Professor McGonagall grinned as she looked at the map over Professor Snape’s shoulder. She was still unused to the way Harry organized the two orders under his command. “Harry, I was wondering why you need Luna. I understand the others need to claim what is theirs but Luna isn’t set to inherit is she?”

“Well technically she is Lady Ravenclaw and that gives her a twenty-five percent stake in the castle, the surrounding lands and the school itself.”

“So you are both going to formally stake your claims?” Remus was slightly surprised by what his charge was planning. “And what about the Hufflepuff quarter? Will the courts accept a letter on behalf of Cedric? He’s of age now; he’s Lord Hufflepuff in his own right.”

“I know; that will be the difficult part. I had wanted Cedric to be there as well but he’s got Charms and I don’t want him to fall behind. The rest of us will have someone to pick up notes and assignments for us but he doesn’t.” Harry sighed.

“It should be okay. If I inform Professor Flitwick of the extenuating circumstances I’m sure he would understand.”

“Harry, do you think claiming ownership of Hogwarts will be enough to keep toadface out for the rest of the year?” Draco asked.

“Maybe, maybe not. I think it will be enough but failing that I still have one last title I have yet to claim, one which I am reluctant to claim.”

“You...mean...but is it still valid...can you...?” Draco stammered in shock.

“All male descendants of Merlin’s line are eligible for kingship given he is of sound mind, body and magic.” Remus recited. Professor Snape and McGonagall were both shocked at what they were suggesting.

“Exactly, I’m the only descendent Merlin has left. And admittedly, the last king was my great-great grandfather but it’s hereditary and mine by right.”

“Well it’s a last resort.” Remus admitted. “However, even between you and Luna, you have a majority stake in the school. The only problem is that Mr. Lovegood is still Luna’s regent even if isn’t a Ravenclaw, he’s still her guardian until she becomes of age or she marries.”

“I know, that’s why I’ll be departing tonight with Luna to get her father’s help.”

“Well then, you seem to have covered everything. Well done.” Professor Snape nodded his approval, his lips twitching upwards in a hidden smile.

Harry knew that one compliment from Professor Snape was worth ten from anyone else so he treasured it. “Thanks.” He nodded his gratitude.

“Hey Harry, we’ve got to get going. It’s five thirty already,” Draco said looking at the clock hanging above Professor Snape’s desk.

“Right, thanks. Professors, we’ll see you at eight.” Harry stood and took his leave.

They left the usual way talking as they went until they reached the library where the entire order was packing their bags and getting ready to leave for dinner.

“Hey all!” Harry called cheerfully. “I’m not sure whether you have all been told or not but we have a possible new recruit for the order.”

Various murmurs of assent or questions about who it was came from everyone in the room.

“Anyhow, I’d like for all of us to meet her in the Entrance Hall before dinner.”

Harry moved over to check over David’s work as the others slowly got themselves sorted. Arianna came up behind him and gave him a hug having finished packing up. Grinning at her over his shoulder Harry shrunk her bag for her whilst listening to David’s recital of the process of making the potion.

Once Harry was satisfied with David’s work he sent the younger Slytherin to dinner first. Looking up Harry saw all of his friends waiting for him. Giving his arm to his girlfriend Harry led the group through the passageways till they arrived in the Entrance Hall.

They picked different points to loiter as they waited for Cho to arrive. Harry was discussing Arianna’s surprise party with the other Slytherins, meanwhile the hall was getting steadily emptier until there was only the order and one other lone figure left.

Let’s go!

Harry saw the surprise of some but those who knew him best weren’t the least bit surprised. Arianna was smiling with approval and a couple of others were watching Cho closely as though they could somehow see what Harry saw in her.

“Cho! How nice to see you again.” Harry gave her a friendly smile in the hopes that he could ease the discomfort and slight fear he was sensing in her.

The others came closer, each eyeing her over as they would a piece of clothing or a new toy. Most found they liked what they saw but Blaise had a different opinion as was evident on his face. Cedric moved to stand behind her, silently giving the Ravenclaw his support.

“I hear you might be willing to join us.”

“Well yes...but...I...” Cho’s eyes were wide with fear and shock.

“Well then shall we?” Harry asked waving his hand in the direction of the Ravenclaw sitting room although Cho didn’t know that.

Drake, Cedric, Ari and...Luna. Can you guys come with?

Sure Harry.

Definitely!

No problems!

Cho was looking at Cedric questioningly. And when he answered with a nod she also nodded.

“Very good.”

Harry started heading for the passageways that lead to the twin’s usual meeting room. Draco, Arianna and Luna followed him closely leaving the older two to their whispered conversation. Although Harry tried his best not to listen in it was rather difficult, especially with Luna pulling the wind in towards her.

“...you didn’t say...”

“...I’m sorry...”

“...so many...how...”

“...Harry’s...good...”

“...still...”

“...you said you wanted...”

“...I do...I just...”

They were closer now so Cho broke off their conversation. Soon they arrived in the messy sitting room, Draco holding the door open as each person walked in. There were bits of who knew what lying around the place. Harry sighed as he cleaned two couches for them. Cho, Cedric and Luna took one whilst Harry, Draco and Arianna took the other.

“So, Cho, as you can see we have a very large group. What do you think you can bring to the group?”

“Well, I’m good at researching and have a good memory...I’ve been told I’m good with people...I have the Chang family trait of mind reading even though I have yet to fully master it...” Cho’s voice wavered uncertainly.

Harry, Lance needs to speak to you. Apparently it’s urgent. Neville’s voice called to him as Draco and Arianna started with their usual questions.

Tell him I’ll be down soon.

Okay.

When Draco and Arianna had finished Harry gestured for Luna to join them. “So, what do you guys think?” Harry asked his partial council.

“She told the truth about everything.” Draco pointed out.

“She was definitely sincere.” Luna added.

“I think I can train her fairly well with the help of Daphne, of course. There’s no question of her upbringing, she’s just a little...” Arianna hesitated.

“Materialistic?” Draco drawled.

“Definitely!” Luna agreed nodding. “But that can be cured.”

“Sure, but that’s up to you Ari. It’ll be your task to train her, with Daphne. I don’t want to disturb the Costas’ studies.” Harry looked at her girlfriend questioningly.

“It should be fine although I might need your help as well, Luna.” Arianna said.

“Whatever you need.”

“So we are agreed then?” Harry asked.

“Yes, she’s in.”

Harry turned to Cho and Cedric who were silently awaiting the groups decision. He stood and gestured for everyone else to stand as well.

“Having considered your answers most carefully we have come to the conclusion that...” Harry trailed off watching as Cho grew more nervous by the second.

“Oh Harry! Stop teasing the poor girl.” Arianna admonished.

Grinning Harry nodded, “Okay, okay. We have agreed that you are worthy of becoming a full member of the order and I’m willing to initiate you tonight at the start of our meeting tonight.”

Cho squealed with delight and Cedric grinned so hard it looked like his face would break. “Thank you so much!” They both kept repeating those four words over and over again.

“You are most welcome! Let’s start heading back.” Harry said opening the door and let everyone out. “I’ve got a couple of things for you but that will have to wait till later. I’ll be leaving first thing in the morning with a few others. Cedric, sorry to spring this on you but we’ll be needing you tommorow.”

“Absolutely, no problems whatsoever.” Cedric agreed. Harry was willing to bet that Cedric would agree with anything at that point.

“And Cho, we’ll start your training straight away. I’m a little overrun with things but I will find time over the weekend to start your physical training. Cedric, you’ll be responsible for her magical training. Ari, social training. Luna, book learning.”

“What about group rules and animagi training?” Draco asked.

“Don’t forget magical trait trianing.” Arianna added.

“Of course. Group rules will be Neville and Draco. Animagi training will be MgGonagall. I don’t want the twins to over do it. As for magical traits’ training I’m thinking Drake, you can to that right? And Ginny can help you.” Harry thought quickly. “Oh Ari, can you take care of scheduling please? You know my timetable.”

“Alright.” Ari nodded. “Cho, I’m going to need your timetable. Don’t worry, I’ll give you time off to hang with your friends.”

“Hang?” Cho asked uncertainly.

“Yeah, you know have fun.” Ari explained . The entire group had picked up some muggle phrases from the muggle-raised members of the order during their time together.

“Oh, okay.” Cho said dazedly.

They had reached the Great Hall where they headed for dinner at their own tables. When Harry sat down in his seat he gestured for Lance to join him.

“I was told you needed to speak to me.” Harry started filling his plate.

“ Well yes, I was wondering about our...arrangement.” Lance discreetly threw up an undetectable privacy charm. His family’s special trait lay in magical protection.

“Ah, yes. The gorgeous Su Li in exchange for your loyalty .”

“Yeah, the thing is I’ve heard certain...rumours that her father is going to engage her to Blaise.”

“I see, I will speak with Mr. Wilkes directly. Rest assured she shall be yours before you are of age.” Harry’s eyes flashed as he cursed Mr. Li’s plans and it’s interference on one of his most loyal soldiers. The term, although slightly derogatory was rather accurate. Harry’s outer circle, now known as Potter’s army, were mere followers. They did what was required of them without argument.

“Thank you Harry! I owe you for this.” Lance gave Harry a smile that was rarely seen outside the Slytherin Common Room.

“It was in our agreement remember.” Harry said swallowing a mouthful of chicken. “Now wipe that smile of your face, we have a reputation to uphold.

“Of course! Sorry to disturb your dinner. I’ll be going now.” Lance schooled his expression back into it’s usual blankness before taking down his privacy charm and moving away.

As soon as Harry had finished eating he gestured for the others who have finished to follow him. Aside from Draco and Luna the others who had gone with him to Ravenclaw’s sitting room were still eating.

Ari, can you wait for Cho and bring her to the Common Room. And, if possible, get her to hurry up.

Once they were all seated with Cho hovering nervously. Byt Cedric's chair. Harry took out their last bottle of animagi potion and their last galleon necklace.

"Most of you would have noticed that Cho here has been accepted as one of us." Harry paused as those who knew her clapped. "Here's your necklace which you are to wear always. And as for this, take it now." Harry handed her both items watching as she put the necklace on and drank the potion.

Cedric caught her with reflexes only a seeker could have. He dropped her into his seat gently, standing as they waited for her to come around. Seconds passed and everyone present witnessed Cedric's growing anxiety. Some smirked, some snickered and some just shook their heads with slight smiles on their faces.

"Wow!" Cho was starting to come around and her brain finally registered what had just happened. "Animagus potion!"

"Yeah, Draco brewed it ages ago." Arianna succesfully imitated her cousin's drawl to Draco's amusement.

"Ages ago?" Cho asked.

"What form did you get?" Luna moved forward curiously but lost her balance when a chair appeared in front of her.

Stumbling backwards Luna landed in Blaises lap. Both of them tensed and froze, the positions were awkward enough but given Luna's feelings for Blaise and his recent breakup with Megan things were a lot more tense. Looking at the pair Harry tried to sense what it was they were feeling. Blaise was, understandably somewhat confused and uncomfortable with the situation whereas Luna was happy and yet, at the same time, scared of what Blaise's reaction was going to be.

"So Cho, what form did you get?" Ginny asked in an attempt to ease the tension in the room.

“Oh, it was a swan. A beautiful, white swan.” Cho gushed having caught onto the fact that something was wrong even if she didn’t know what was going on.

Harry kept an ear out for Luna and Blaise’s conversation as the group made for the inner court.

“...I’m sorry...I...”

“...no...it’s okay...”

“...I wasn’t expecting...chair...”

“...yeah, I understand...”

“...so...”

“...we’re good...”

Satisfied that they had worked things out between them Harry transferred and hurried through the corridors calling out for them to do the same. When Harry arrived he found most of the adults seated there along with the rest of the order. Harry took his seat and spole as Blaise and Luna joined them, “Good evening all, we’re just waiting on a couple of others then we’ll get started.”

As they waited Harry took the time to speak to some of the adults, most of whom he hadn’t seen in the month since the Longbottom’s party. Mr. Wilkes was drawn aside to arrange their discussion after the meeting. Harry also checked on Cho to make sure she was settling in okay. Finally the last of the adults arrived and Harry waited as Mr. Costa took his seat next to Blaise.

“Right, first order of business,” Hary stood. “I’d like for everyone to meet our newest member, Cho Chang.” Harry went around the room and named all of the adults for her. “Secondly, as most of you would already know. Umbridge is planning on entering Hogwarts. Now this is our plan. We are to hold her off until the start of next term at the very least.”

“But are you really going to let her in next year?” Charlie asked, shocked.

“That has yet to be decided.” Harry admitted. “However, I’m sure the new minister will help us control her, whichever way things go.”

“New minister?” Tonks asked, perking up noticeably from her seat next to Bill. They two had been dating for over a year now.

“Who do you think will be most likely to succeed Fudge?” Madam Bones asked curiously.

“You will. And Kingsley shall take over as Head Auror...who’s the current head?”

“Richard Gallagher, he’s a good man.” Kingsley answered.

“Good.” Harry nodded, glad that the last piece of his plan was falling into place. “And do you think he is capable of taking over for you?” He directed his question at Madam Bones.

“Capable enough.” Madam Bones agreed.

“Then that’s settled. I have a few surprises for court tomorrow. It would be best if you guys didn’t know just yet. What I would like for all of you to do, however, is to subtly promote Madam Bones and where possible demote Fudge.”

They talked for a while of various sub-plans for the following day and the near future. It was another hour or so before they split up, everyone leaving with at least one sheet of parchment that had their notes of what was to happen tomorrow.

A/N: Hey all! So yes, I will finally be getting to the court case in this chapter. I'm sorry if it isn't as elaborate as some people think. But there will be more Umbridge stuff later. I sort of wanted to leave it open.

Dumbledore stuff is due to start in the next chapter or two, which I probably won't be putting up for a while. RL has suddenly become insanely busy so I won't have as much time as I did before.

Oh and when I was referring to the 'army' as solders I sort of meant that as long as they don't think it's wrong they will do it, even if they don't like to do it.

Have fun with this chapter! And sorry the next one won't be for a while!

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Chapter 42: How to Deal with a Toad - Part 3

After they had split up Harry led Mr. Wilkes, who was now insisting that Harry call him by his first name, and Draco to Slytherins's sitting room.

"Gary, please sit." Harry gestured to the armchair closest to the fire. "Jade!"

Jade appeared and after a few words from Harry she disappeared again. Harry sat down on the couch and lit the fireplace with just a slight flick of his wrist.

"Now, I've been told that you are considering a match between Blaise and Su Li." Harry looked sternly at his...uncle.

Draco, read every word please.

Of course.

"I'd never! It's his choice and it always will be."

“Well that’s good because I don’t think Blaise could ever forgive you for that.”

“I know and, to be honest, we still don’t know each other that well. I’ve only been back with them for a little while; I can’t just make a decision like that for him.”

“Understandable. But did Mr. Li offer?”

Jade had returned with a tea tray for them and after asking Harry if there was anything else she left again. Draco poured the tea as Gary answered. “Admittedly yes, we’re old friends from our Hogwarts days and he’s worried she won’t find a husband or at the very least a steady boyfriend. But I explained to him that I couldn’t force Blaise.”

“I see.”

Harry took a moment to think about how he was going to deal with things, especially how things were going to work without anyone getting hurt.

Harry, every word was true.

Thanks Drake.

Also, just to let you know, I think Su Li likes Cedric.

My thoughts exactly. But Cedric asked for Cho and I’m not going to let anything get in the way of them getting together.

Good Luck!

Thanks!

“Very well. Could you, please, arrange a time for me to meet Mr. Li? And if possible, make it a public place.”

“Of course! But how will I know if you’re free.”

“Contact Remus, I know you adults have your own communication method, whatever it is. Remus knows my timetable.”

“Very well.”

Luna, you good to go? Harry asked as they drank their tea.

Waiting for you in the common room now.

I'll be there soon.

“So sorry to cut this short but I've got another appointment to get to tonight.” Harry returned his empty cup to the tray.

“Understandable, you are a very busy young man, aren't you?” Gary followed suit standing up.

“Only sometimes.”

Harry moved to the lit fireplace and gestured for the other two to follow first. Gary returned and Draco returned to the common room.

“Hey Harry, we going.” Luna asked when Harry arrived.

“Yeah we are, after you.” Harry stepped aside and let Luna return back to her home first. He quickly followed her call of Lovegood Manor.

Stepping out of the fireplace Harry found a wand pointed at him. Holding out his empty hands in front of him Harry slowly moved away from the fireplace. He didn't want to accidentally channel the roaring fire if things came down to a fight.

“Dad, please stop! This is Harry, he won't do anything. We just needed to talk to you about tomorrow.”

“Yes, but how do I know he is Harry Potter? For that matter how do I know you are Luna? You are supposed to be at Hogwarts right now.”

Luna?

Yeah, I know.

“Dad, remember the day I started Hogwarts? You said, there will be some people who would laugh at me for being different and there will be those who accept it. Well, I found them and together we’ve changed Hogwarts into a place where everyone can be friends. If you don’t help us, Umbridge will turn things back to the way it was, divided.” Luna spoke with a passion her father had not seen before.

“I see...and what about you?” Luna’s dad looked at Harry intently.

“I’m not sure how much you know about me; therefore, I’m not sure how to prove to you I am who I am.”

“Show him your powers Harry.” Luna said letting go of the wind in the room, which she always unconsciously held.

Harry nodded and closed his eyes for a moment to regain his focus. When his eyes opened again they were glowing as bright as the spell that had killed his parents. Spreading his arms out Harry gathered the heat in the room around him. The wind picked up, sweeping his robes behind him like a cape.

Releasing the magical energy that had come to him after his scare Harry charged the air around him with it. He unconsciously repaired an old tapestry that had been knocked over with some of the excess magic.

“Okay Harry, I believe you.” Mr. Lovegood looked ready to faint.

“Sorry...” Harry hissed slowly letting go of his accumulated power; he returned the fire to the fireplace and relaxed.

“Okay, can we get to it? I still need to finish my Charms essay.” Luna sat down impatient to get things over with.

“Didn’t you and Ginny finish it already?” Harry asked with confusion, also sitting.

“Yeah, but I still have to proof it.” Luna rolled her eyes. “I mean Gunny got Ari to proof hers but...”

“I’ll proof it for you.” Harry agreed.

Each of the younger members had a mentor/protector that they went to for help. Technically Luna was under Arianna’s care and Ginny was under Harry’s but as Ginny had gone to Ari, Harry felt it only fair that he help Luna. By the time they had that settled Mr. Lovegood had recovered from his shock and they began to discuss the forthcoming court session.

“ We’ll see you tomorrow then, Mr. Lovegood.” Harry stood, preparing to leave.

“I’ll meet you outside the courtroom.” Mr. Lovegood agreed standing.

Harry rested his hand on the fireplace and gestured for Luna to leave first. After Luna had gone Harry bowed one last time before he, too, returned to Hogwarts.

Breakfast the next morning was tense. The entire order was on the edge of their seats with nervousness. In fact, even the students not in the know could feel that something was wrong. Those who were leaving could be seen reciting speeches between bites.

Part-way through, Harry looked up at the head table and saw that all of the professors were just as tense and nervous. Dumbledore was also noticeably absent. Half-an-hour before the court session was scheduled to take place Harry gathered the other six who were going with him in their common room.

Arianna and Luna were already in their seats reciting their speeches to each other when Harry arrived. As he passed them Harry dropped a kiss onto Ari’s cheek before taking his seat. Neville nodded a greeting to both girls before he, too, sat down in his armchair.

They discussed their chances whilst waiting for the others; mostly though, they were arguing about whether or not the speeches would even be needed once Harry, Luna and Cedric revealed themselves and staked their claims. Luna and Neville thought they would most likely be needed whereas Harry and Arianna agreed they were just a precaution.

Anthony arrived not long after towing a reluctant Blaise. The two of them were in the midst of a heated argument when they stepped through the entrance. They stopped short when they saw that the others were already there. They took their seats without a word looking surprisingly flustered. Harry decided to ignore their strange behavior in favor of checking on Cedric's location.

Cedric! Where are you?

Almost there, Harry! Sorry, had to catch some friends of mine. To make sure they could take notes for me.

Okay, well hurry!

No sooner had Harry dropped the connection did Cedric come stumbling through the entrance. "Sorry guys."

Cedric took his seat at the same time that Harry left his. "Okay, I hope you've all memorized your speeches but don't worry if you haven't for Daphne is on standby with copies of all of our speeches. We may not even need them anyway. Questions?"

"Just one. How are we going to go about getting Madam Bones into office?" Anthony asked with his usual curiosity.

"I'm not completely sure just yet but I'll get Theo to look at it when we get back. Anything else?"

When the others all shook their heads Harry headed for the fireplace. "Well then, shall we?"

When they arrived Harry noticed that all of the adults save those who worked in the ministry, were present. They had all taken up different positions around the great atrium. Harry headed for the security check in with Neville and Arianna flanking him and the others not far behind.

They quickly made it through after Harry gave the security guard his death stare. They reached level two without any problems and, ignoring the looks they were getting from some of the Aurors, they met Mr. Lovegood in front of courtroom ten.

Harry couldn't help but smirk as he recalled the last time he attended a trial at that very courtroom. Hoping for an equally happy ending Harry greeted Mr. Lovegood. The others came and they made their way inside separately not wanting to draw attention to the fact that they were actually together.

Harry entered and sat with his friends at the front. The adults took their place in the wizengamont side of the courtroom. When everyone was seated Fudge stood up and called the court to session. Harry smirked; even though Fudge was judging that session the school board had the final say.

Unlike like the last case he attended the Judge had no say in the outcome. Umbridge started first, going on about how Hogwarts' standards had fallen and how she needed to be there to watch over things. This went on for a while until Mr. Malfoy stood and asked for the opinion of "some of the students". Finally getting their chance Harry gestured for Cedric to start.

"Thank you, Lord Malfoy." Cedric stood in the stand and bowed to Mr. Malfoy. "As most of you are aware I'm currently in my sixth year at Hogwarts and am the sole heir to the Diggory Estate. What is not public knowledge, however, is the fact that I am a direct descendent of Helga Hufflepuff. And as such, as her heir, I have a stake in Hogwarts."

Everyone aside from Harry and his friends started with surprise. Even Mr. Malfoy and the other adults were surprised. In between the various murmurings of shock Harry signaled for Luna to take her turn.

“He is not the only one.” Luna called in a ringing voice that could be heard from every corner of the room. There was a deadly silence as everyone turned towards the young Ravenclaw. “I have also discovered that I am the heir of Rowena Ravenclaw. Therefore, I also have a stake in the school.”

The murmurings broke out again, even louder this time, like bees in the springtime. It wasn't until an old lady of the Wizengamot stood that there was silence once again. “But if that's the case then who are the heirs of Gryffindor and Slytherin?”

Harry stood, silently asking Neville who the lady was. Neville had more access to elite society than the rest of them as a result of his grandmother's parties. That's Lady Lilith Peterson; she's Tyler's grandmother and regent until he's of age.

Thanks.

“I am, Lady Peterson.” Harry also projected his voice over the entire courtroom. “I am the heir of Gryffindor through my father and the heir of Slytherin through my mother.”

“Impossible!” One of the old lords stood, Harry thought he looked vaguely familiar even if they had never met. “My sister was no heir of Slytherin!”

Neville, is that...?

Your great-uncle and Daphne's grandfather...yes.

“My mother was the heir of Slytherin through my grandfather, Peter Evans who was also a descendent of Ravenclaw.” Harry clarified.

His great-uncle sat down then in surprise. No one spoke for a while whilst they took in the new information. Harry and Luna joined Cedric up the front as they waited for someone to speak. Finally Madam Bones stood and cleared her throat. “Well, given these revelations I

ask the court to vote to allow these three heirs to act in place of the school board as is their right.”

The vote went through fairly easily as most of the members were still in shock. Fudge was frozen to his seat and was looking at Umbridge accusingly as though all of it was her fault. Which it was if anyone was to think about it carefully, Fudge was a weak man; it wasn't hard to see what influence Umbridge held over him.

“Mr. Potter, Mr. Diggory and Miss Lovegood. This case is now in your hands. As the only members of the school board it is your right to decide this case, now, if you will.” Madame Bones had taken over for Fudge who still had not moved. Umbridge was also in a state of shock, she probably never imagined that there could be someone to challenge her.

They went through the proper charade of having a council whilst Mr. Malfoy calmed down the other members of the old school board who had suddenly found themselves out of a job. After an appropriate amount of time Harry stepped forward.

“First we'd like to apologize to the old school board. It was not our intention to step on your toes. We will still need your advice from time to time as we value your experience and we will be busy with our own studies.” That seemed to pacify most of the old board who sighed with relief.

“ Secondly, we shall be taking full control of school board responsibilities starting now.” Luna added.

“Lastly, we have decided that it would be pointless to appoint Miss Umbridge as an overseer at present.” Cedric finished. “The school year is almost over and it would be better for an overseer to come in at the start of the year.”

There were nods all around as everyone agreed with their decisions. Fudge had finally come out of his frozen shock and stood to protest. “Wait! That Ravenclaw is still a minor! She can't assume authority until she is of age! Neither can Mr. Potter!”

“Yes she can!” Mr. Lovegood stood up against the disapproving murmurings of the crowd. Questions on Fudge’s lack of manners and respect in referring to Luna were breaking out throughout the court. “As her father and guardian, I give her my approval to make this decision and to make all of her future decisions regarding her responsibilities as Lady Ravenclaw.”

“That still leaves Potter!” Umbridge screeched.

“I will speak for him!” Sirius stood up. Unfortunately Remus and Professor Snape weren’t able to leave Hogwarts and so it was up to Sirius to claim Harry’s title for him. “As his guardian, Professor Remus Lupin, is busy with his responsibilities at Hogwarts it is my right to stand in his place as Harry’s god-father. And I also give Harry my full approval regarding any decisions he makes as Lord Gryffindor.”

“I think that sums everything up.” Madam Bones stood as the entire Wizengamont nodded with her, the only exception being Dumbledore who was frowning unhappily.

The session finished there with Fudge and Umbridge arguing and Dumbledore rushing out disappointed. Harry was bombarded with exclamations from the other adults about how he either hadn’t told him that he was the heir or that he hadn’t properly prepared them for what had happened.

Before they had made it to the Atrium Harry was intercepted by Lord Greengrass. “Harry Potter, I have not seen you since you were a babe in your mother’s arms. I’m not sure if you know who I am...”

“Of course! Lord Greengrass, or would you prefer I call you Uncle Harry?” Harry smiled and bowed slightly.

“It is fine if you called me Uncle. I was wondering if we could arrange a time to talk. There were some things your grandmother trusted me to tell you.”

“Certainly! I’d love that. However, I’m flat out with my school work at the moment. Would it be too inconvenient if I were to postpone this meeting till the Easter break?”

“Not at all, I shall contact you closer to that date then. And good work up there, I’m sure your mother and grandmother would have been proud of that performance.” Harry Greengrass smiled and left them.

Well, I think that went rather well. Neville breathed a sigh of relief. You didn’t even really need us there at all.

Yes, it was much easier than I thought it would be. Of course having Madam Bones on our side really did help.

I wonder what’s going to happen to Umbridge now. Obviously Fudge is very angry at her, will he just fire her? Or will he demote her, do you think?

Hard to say at this point. We’ll have the Aurors gather some inside information later.

They returned to Hogwarts in time for their third lesson of the day having missed the first two. Harry, Neville and Blaise returned to DADA with the Hufflepuffs and noticed that Remus wasn’t as tense as he was this morning which could only mean one thing. One of the other adults had told him what happened.

After class they stayed back with the other Slytherins to discuss what had happened. Susan and Hannah had remained as well. Harry, Neville and Blaise went through every detail of the session until the growling of their stomachs signaled the need for lunch.

They headed for the Great Hall and found that there was more than just lunch waiting there for them. The Great Hall was alight with gossip about that morning’s court session. Even Dumbledore was sitting in his seat, for the first time in a long time, arguing with McGonagall. Harry frowned as he took his seat; the hall had gone silent upon his arrival. What had happened now?

Chapter 33